



NAVY NEWS

DECEMBER 2013

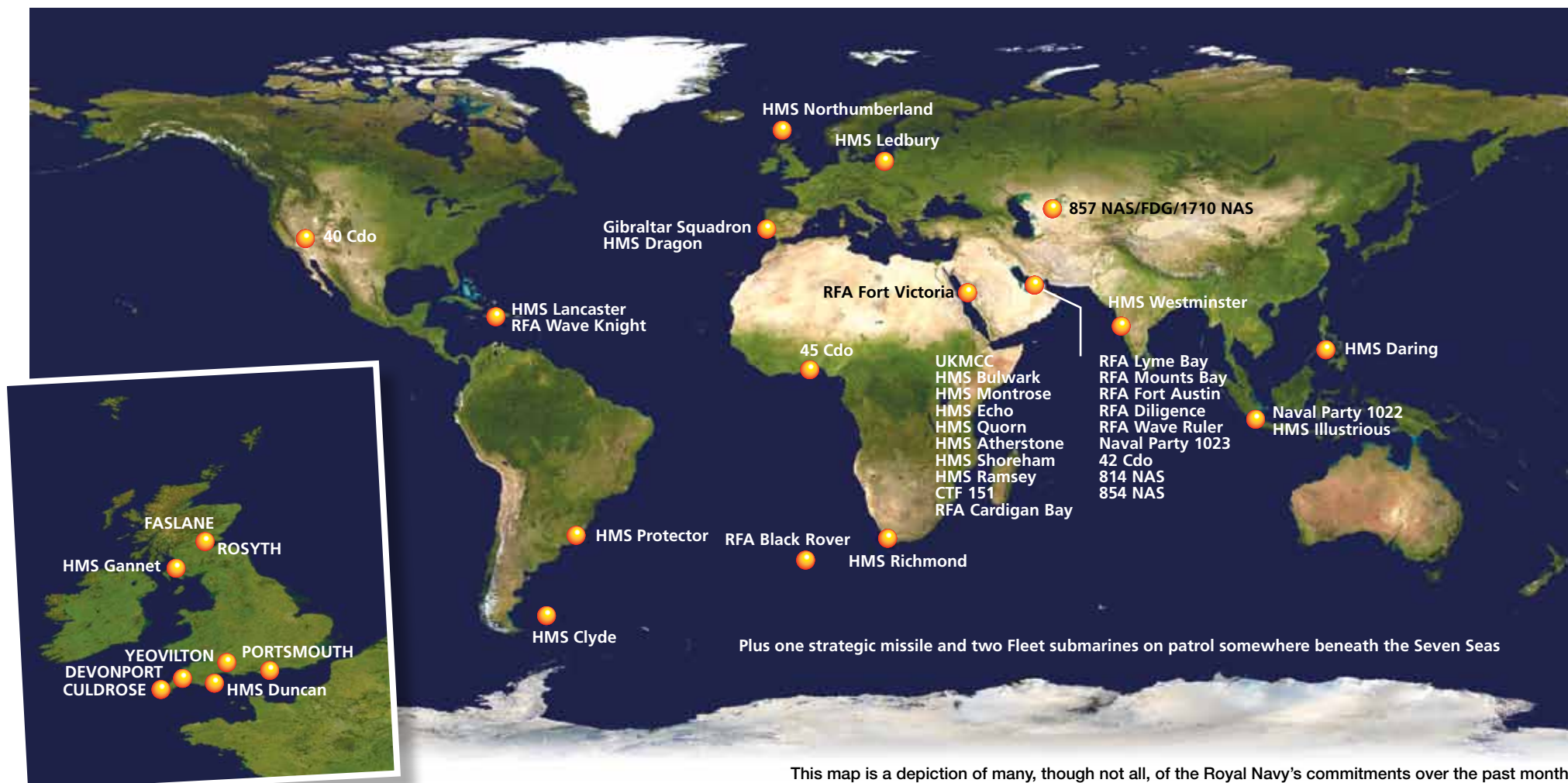
HMS Daring's Lt Cdr Teilo Elliot-Smith carries a shelter pack ashore on the remote Philippine island of Calagnaan, whose inhabitants had run out of food in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan. See the centre pages for details of the Royal Navy's response to the disaster.

Picture: PO(Phot) Wheelie A'Barrow, FRPU East



DESTROYER BUILDS HOPE





This map is a depiction of many, though not all, of the Royal Navy's commitments over the past month

AS we approach the end of 2013, there is precious little prospect of a happy new year for some.

Communities in the central Philippines were wiped off the map last month by the devastating Typhoon Haiyan, one of the most destructive storms on record.

The British response was to send Type 45 destroyer **HMS Daring** to the archipelago to help some of the millions left homeless and desperate for food, water and medical supplies (*see centre pages*).

Her place was due to be taken up by helicopter carrier **HMS Illustrious** as *Navy News* went to press, allowing Daring to continue her global odyssey.

This time of year is also a chance to reflect on the sacrifices of those who gave their lives in the service of the country, and we round up some of the **November ceremonies** at home and abroad (*see pages 34-35*).

Elsewhere it was business as usual, protecting sea lanes, saving life and limb, training for all eventualities and looking to the future.

The green berets of **45 Commando** continued their jungle training in West Africa, this time in Benin (*see page 13*), while their **40 Commando** comrades from Norton Manor were letting rip in the Mojave desert (*see page 9*), and **42 Commando** joined in Omani Cougar with the Vikings of the **Armoured Support Group** (*see page 7*) – the last major exercise of the Cougar 13 deployment by the UK Response Force Task Group, led by **HMS Bulwark**.

The two escorts assigned to Cougar – HM Ships **Westminster** and **Montrose** – have been ranging around the Indian Ocean (in the case of the former) and the Gulf. Westminster visited Goa for the annual workout with the Indian Navy, Konkan (*see opposite*), while Montrose tested her ability to repair and shield a stricken tanker, before herself playing the part of a lame duck needing the assistance of **RFA Diligence** (*see page 14*).

HMS Northumberland found herself meeting up with a Russian battle-cruiser in the Iceland Gap (*see page 6*), while her sister **Sutherland** bowed out of action for several months to begin a refit in her home base with an impressive ceremonial entry of Plymouth (*see page 4*).

Bombers don't often feature in these pages, so hats off to **HMS Vigilant** which completed her first deterrent patrol in five years following a massive refit and work-up (*see page 5*).

And there was top bombing too from the **F35B** as the Lightning II directed a laser-guided bomb on to a target for the first time (*see page 6*).

The Lightnings will be leaping off the deck of **HMS Queen Elizabeth** in under five years' time. The ski ramp of the carrier is now in place – thus completing work on the leviathan's hull (*see page 8*).

Looking even further ahead, the government has announced an order for three new offshore patrol vessels (*see page 4*).

A Sea King of **771 NAS** plucked five fishermen to safety as their doomed boat sank in stormy seas 20 miles off the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall (*see right*).

HMS Dragon's inaugural deployment drew to a close with dogs, Wrens, submarines, and Maltese – not necessarily in that order (*see page 10*).

Her youngest sisters are making good progress: the sixth and final Type 45 destroyer, **HMS Duncan**, has been blasting away with her guns (*see page 5*) while ship No.5, **HMS Defender**, has completed OST for the first time (*see page 4*), using many of the skills serving HMS Daring so well in the Philippines – which neatly brings us full circle.

With seconds to spare...

THIS is the moment a Royal Navy helicopter arrives at the scene to save the lives of five fishermen off the Cornish coast.

Little more than an hour after the Sea King from 771 Naval Air Squadron arrived on station, the 21-metre trawler Panamera disappeared beneath the waves, two dozen miles off the Lizard Peninsula.

In the intervening hour, every man aboard – three Frenchmen and two Portuguese – was saved by the Royal Navy Search and Rescue crew, who battled 45-knot winds, heavy seas and a boat behaving wildly to pluck all to safety.

The duty helicopter at RNAS Cudrose, Rescue 193, was scrambled and was over the French-registered Panamera, about 20 miles southeast of the Lizard, just a quarter of an hour later.

The fishing vessel had been holed and was taking water. At first, the Sea King crew lowered an emergency pump down to the Panamera to try to keep the ocean at bay.

But within ten minutes of the pump being put into action by the fishermen, it was clear the vessel was taking on too much water.

The fishermen then decided it was time to abandon ship and launched their life rafts – but these were very quickly lost due to the wind conditions and it was down to the Royal Navy to winch them up to safety.

"The vessel was beginning to heavily list as we began to lift the sailors on board the helicopter," said Lt Paul Smalley, one of two pilots in the Sea King.

"The Panamera had also lost its steerage which meant the vessel was surfing the waves, accelerating and decelerating rapidly making it difficult to get a stable platform."

Two of the sailors were winched safely and a third was winched as the vessel was sinking; the final two had to jump into the water but were quickly winched up with aircrewman PO Mark Richardson ensuring they were lifted safely into the Sea King.

"It was close and I was concerned that if we didn't get a move on they would be swept away," said Mark. "It was only us on the scene at the time so we couldn't make any mistakes."

Pilot *Kapitänleutnant* Steffan Volkwein – on exchange with the squadron from the German Navy – said the final seconds of the Panamera were particularly dramatic.

"It was eerie when the boat went down with its lights still on as you could see a glow from under the water. I was reminded of the film *Titanic*."

"That was a tough rescue and a real eye opener!"

Once safe, the fishermen were taken back to Cudrose for hot drinks and warm clothing.

"The whole event was very quick for us, and being back in the Cudrose crew room with our guests watching TV minutes after pulling them from the water must have been very strange for them," said Lt Cdr Paul Robertson, Rescue 193's observer.

The crew were later repatriated via the Fishermen's Mission in Newlyn.

Marine guilty of murder

A ROYAL Marine is due to be sentenced this month after being found guilty at Court Martial of murdering an unidentified wounded insurgent in Helmand province, Afghanistan, in September 2011.

The Serviceman – known only as Marine A during the Court Martial – was part of a patrol that came under fire from insurgents, and which called in air support.

An Apache helicopter fired on the insurgents, but when the marines approached the site of the attack they found a badly-wounded man lying in a field.

In an incident that was captured on the helmet camera of Marine B, Marine A is seen to fire his 9mm pistol at the wounded insurgent.

Marine A – a sergeant at the time – was found guilty of murder by the Court Martial, held at the Military Court Centre, Bulford, in Wiltshire.

He is due to be sentenced on December 6.

Two comrades, Marines B and C, were also charged with murder, as the prosecution claimed they had been a party to the killing, but both men were found not guilty and are now able to return to military service.

Following the verdict, the Deputy Commandant General Royal Marines, Brig Bill Dunham, said: "What we have heard [during the Courts Martial] is not consistent with the ethos, values and standards of the Royal Marines."

"It was a truly shocking and appalling aberration."

"It should not have happened and it should never happen again."

And Prime Minister David Cameron said: "We should not let that single incident in any way besmirch the incredible work that the Royal Marines have done over not just decades but centuries."



Meeting of capitals

MAKING their final approach coming in to land on the flight deck is HMS Westminster's Lynx Mk8.

Except that's not the Type 23 frigate ahead of the helicopter, but Indian destroyer INS Delhi, all 6,000 tonnes of her, as Britain's 'capital ship' joined forces with the Commonwealth Navy.

Every year the two maritime forces link up for Exercise Konkan – named after a 500-mile stretch of India's west coast which includes the great port of Mumbai and the state of Goa – sometimes in UK waters (as the Delhi herself found back in 2009), more typically off the coast of India.

It was to Goa, beloved by backpackers and gap-year students, that Westminster sailed to take her place in the 2013 exercise which was split into two phases: one alongside as the two navies get to know each other and their ships, and the business bit at sea.

Goa is one of the Indian Navy's staging posts on the country's western shores: home to coastal batteries, a naval air station, naval hospital, signals stations, stores and depots.

It's also the headquarters of the Indian equivalent of the Fleet Air Arm, the Naval Air Arm. It fell to Westminster's CO Capt Hugh Beard to call on its Commanding Officer (and also CO of the Goa naval area) Rear Admiral Balvinder Singh Parhar.

The alongside part of Konkan – which saw Westminster berthed next to her hosts, the fearsome-looking destroyer INS Delhi – saw the Portsmouth-based frigate hold a series of lectures and tours for the Indians to give them an idea of RN kit and working practices.

"The enthusiasm and desire of the Indian crew to understand our practices was clear," said Lt Simon Yates, Westminster's Lynx observer.

"There is already a significant crossover of procedures between our two navies. Konkan has deepened that mutual understanding and I would hope to work with the Indian Navy again."

As Royal Navy warships do wherever they go in the world, there was some flag flying – or rather lowering, courtesy of an evening reception with ceremonial sunset attended by Admiral Parhar, many of his senior staff, the Mayor of Goa and other local dignitaries.

And there was just time for a spot of friendly sporting competition – football (3-1 to Westminster) golf (2-0 to the hosts) – before the ships put to sea for the active phase of Konkan, once an uninvited visitor had departed.

Bird watching has become something of a hobby for the various RN ships patrolling the Indian Ocean this autumn – cormorants, hoopoes, a scops owl and African sacred ibis have

all made a pussier's grey funnel battlewagon their home (albeit temporarily).

Westminster was feeling a little left out... until Westy the Osprey dropped in.

The bird (*pandion haliaetus*) was spotted keeping lookout from the ship's 4.5in gun by the frigate's clubz LPT 'Reggie' Cawley who was steering Westminster at the time.

"I had been on the wheel for some time and had seen several different species of marine and bird life. I was just handing over to my relief, LReg Amanda Drake, when something flew in front of the ship's bridge, blocking the sun before casually resting on the gun barrel," she said.

"On looking at it, I noticed that it was one of the birds that I had seen from a distance earlier in the day circling the ship. I have to admit that Amanda and I both got a little excited as we had not seen a bird that size in the wild before."

In fact, by the time the bird settled on the Kryten it had already been encouraged to leave the flight deck; it settled on the rotor blades of the frigate's Lynx... and the Flight were a tad concerned its sharp talons might damage the composite material.

After standing watch on the main gun, the bird finally decided to head off into the setting Indian Ocean sun.

Westy wasn't the only rare bird the frigate caught sight of during Konkan. There was also the *mare circus* – Sea Harrier.

Retired from Fleet Air Arm service more than half a dozen years ago, the jump jet continues to fly with the Indian Navy – and put Westminster's Seawolf missile system trackers to the test during a series of 'attacks'.

The frigate and the Delhi also rehearsed gunnery, anti-submarine warfare, boarding operations, close manoeuvring and cross-deck flying with the Type 23's Lynx touching down on Delhi's flight deck and the Indians' Chetak (a French Alouette built under licence) hopping across to be hosted by the British flight crew.

Capt Beard said he was pleased with how Konkan went.

"The officers and crew of the Delhi helped to make this a most successful exercise. Many valuable insights have been gained and the long-standing goodwill reinforced."

"The Indian Navy continues to be an invaluable ally at sea and in the air – and a worthy adversary in the field of sport."

After Konkan, the ship resumed her counter-piracy/maritime security mission in the Indian Ocean pausing, like every RN vessel, at the 11th hour of the tenth day of the 11th month for a Remembrance Sunday service, with Capt Beard casting a wreath into the grey wastes from the frigate's flight deck.



Pictures: LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum, HMS Westminster



The Fighting Clan-orama



THE thunder of guns from HMS Sutherland reverberated around Plymouth Sound for the last time in a year as the frigate returned home ready for a major revamp.

The Fighting Clan fired a 13-gun salute courtesy of her

3lb ceremonial gun, the bangs temporarily drowning out the skirl of bagpipes, as the ship marked the end of the latest chapter of her 16-year career sailing into her home port.

For the past seven months,

Sutherland has been our shield against submarines, acting as the duty Towed Array Patrol Ship to keep watch on anything untoward happening below the waves around the British Isles.

In addition to that anti-

submarine mission, the frigate has also taken part in five international exercises, trained would-be warfare officers and supported the British defence industry in London at the DSEI defence exhibition.

With an 11-month refit looming in her home base, the ship's company will drop from around 200 souls to a mere 50 working with the civilian team carrying out the overhaul.

Among the 150 men and

women to leave the Type 23 frigate is her CO Cdr Al Wilson, who left last month.

"Our last entry into Devonport marks the end of an incredibly busy two years for the ship and crew, and we marked it in typical

New patrol ships soften jobs blow

THREE new patrol ships will be built to replace the Royal Navy's fishery protection squadron.

But despite the £350m investment by Whitehall, warship building in Portsmouth will end within a year and Britain's biggest shipbuilder BAE will shed 1,775 jobs across the land.

Even with construction of the second of the Royal Navy's new carriers, HMS Prince of Wales – and 13 planned replacements for the Duke-class frigates – the defence firm says there is insufficient work to sustain shipbuilding at its three yards: Portsmouth, Govan and Scotstoun.

It has decided to shed 940 staff in Portsmouth – and cease shipbuilding there in the second half of next year – as well as making 835 redundancies at sites in Filton, Govan, Rosyth, and Scotstoun.

However, under an agreement between the MOD and BAE signed back in 2009, Whitehall would have been liable to pay for any periods when no shipbuilding was taking place.

Rather than pay for yards standing idle, the MOD decided it would far better value for the taxpayer to invest in new warships – and maintain the skills of the shipwrights ahead of work beginning on the next generation of frigates, the Type 26s, later in the decade.

Work on the new Offshore Patrol Vessels is due to begin on the Clyde next year – names and definite designs have yet to be worked out, but they will be larger than the existing trio – with the first ship delivered to the Royal Navy in 2017.

They will replace HMS Tyne, Mersey and Severn, which have been in service for the past decade patrolling UK waters and helping to enforce fishery laws.

The blow of losing nearly 1,000 shipbuilding jobs in Portsmouth – barely a decade after the industry returned to the city following a 35-year gap – will be ameliorated by an investment of more than £100m in the naval base to support the two future carriers.

HMS Queen Elizabeth is due to arrive in the Solent in late 2016/early 2017, followed by her sister Prince of Wales at the end of the decade. Each is over three times the size of the existing carriers.

When one is in harbour, it will be berthed at North Corner, which requires strengthening, additional power supplies, and an approach channel dredging all the way out into the Solent.

New cranes and caissons will also be required and it's likely a multi-storey car park will be built somewhere in the base as parking on the jetties will not be possible.



Picture: LA(Phot) Joel Rouse, FRPU West

Pre-season training for £1bn Defender

THAT'LL warm you up on a cold autumn day.

As fire rages through the ill-starred village of Bull Point (pop. 30), HMS Defender's fire-fighters move in to quell the flames.

This was Defender's first taste of the disaster-hit village as she went through her inaugural Operational Sea Training experience – two months of assessment likened by some in the RN to 'pre-season training'.

Which is just what a Defender requires for the challenges to come (she's lined up for her maiden deployment next year).

The Portsmouth-based Type 45 put more than 100 sailors ashore in the aftermath of a storm, which had knocked out power supplies, caused buildings to collapse and fires to rage.

As well as a workout for Defender's crew, the disaster also tested Devon and Cornwall Police and South West Ambulance Trust who set up an emergency headquarters at Bull Point to test their ability to cope with a major incident and to work with the Royal Navy.

"I'm impressed by the enormous amount of assets the Navy can draw on and the multiple skills – like medical and fire-fighting training – they all have," said ambulance paramedic Dominic Higgins.

"They can conduct search and rescue and secure an area of operations and of course



● **Defender's crew make it clear to an insurgent to disappear**

Picture: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon, FRPU West

can call on the helicopter, food, bedding and boats."

Particularly useful for the civilian rescuers was the destroyer's Merlin helicopter which, after landing sailors ashore, was on call to do some heavy lifting, ferry casualties to Treliske Hospital in Truro and act as the eyes of the team overseeing disaster relief efforts.

"It is invaluable to see the differences and be prepared for them for a real life incident," said Sgt Lynsey Willis, Devon and Cornwall Police 'bronze' commander.

"We are two highly professional and trained

uniformed organisations which both have one aim – protecting the community – and that worked very well in this exercise."

Barely had Bull Point's public utilities been patched up, fires doused and babies recovered from crumpled buildings, than Defender was safely alongside in Devonport Naval Base.

Quickdraw. Quickdraw. Quickdraw.

To test the responses of the ship's company, armed insurgents stormed the destroyer by land and by sea, demanding an immediate response from the destroyer's reaction force.

For added realism, actors from Amputees in Action writhed in agony, spurting fake blood over the deck to simulate serious battle casualties.

"As we were deployed and the blank rounds were being fired, against actors being used as casualties and intruders, it was great to see all the training and hard work that the ship's company had put in actually paying off," said CPOET(WE) Samantha Johns, in charge of a vehicle checkpoint erected on the jetty.

"The new equipment we were trialling to monitor actually being shot made the exercise seem almost real; it's a massive step forward in training simulations.

"Everyone on the ground thoroughly enjoyed the exercise and were talking about the achievements for days after."

And talking of achievements... Defender successfully completed OST last month.

Catt's ready to pounce

READY to head out to the Gulf this month to take over one of their two sister ships are the crew of Portsmouth minehunter HMS Cattistock.

The 45 sailors aboard the Hunt-class ship came through their two final major assessments with flying colours, first testing the ability of the small 750-tonne warship to deal with all eventualities on her own – then testing her ability to do the same in a larger group of warships.

Cattistock left behind the waters of the Solent she knows so well and decamped to Scotland for two months.

Faslane is home to FOST North – the exacting training organisation which determines whether a ship is ready for the rigours of deployment courtesy of Operational Sea Training.

Cattistock's bridge team were tested in their ability to safely navigate and conduct pilotage in demanding conditions both simulated and real world.

The marine engineers and executive department achieved a particularly high standard owing to experience and hard work, while the Seafox mine disposal system was launched and recovered on a record number of occasions.

"The rigorous training package put high demands on the 'Catt' and her crew and at times serials did not run smoothly," said Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Andy Smith.

"However over the period the crew developed their skills as individuals and as a team came together to achieve high standards across the board."

For their efforts they received a 'very satisfactory' overall score from the FOST team ('satisfactory' is a pass – and the most common 'mark' given by the assessors).

Fresh out of OST and after a period of sonar trials, the ship was thrown into the demanding Joint Warrior exercise to help the fictitious nation of Pastonia, which was ravaged by civil war.

Once again Seafox was used repeatedly, with the remotely-controlled submersible diving to depths of 60m to recover mines as well, while the ship was also called upon to lead a task force through a suspected minefield.

Throughout Joint Warrior, members of the Royal Naval Reserve were embarked across the Fleet with LS(MW) Anthony Peacock joining Cattistock. He's a software test analyst by day and hadn't been to sea since 2002, when minehunters were still minesweepers.

"It was really great to get up to speed with the modern methods of minehunting and put into practice all the weekends and evenings that I have spent training with the RNR," he said.

■ **FOST minehunter training – pages 16-17**

Picture: LA(Phot) Joel Rouse, FRPU West

Sutherland style," he said.

"I am incredibly proud of what we have collectively achieved during my time in command – from operations in the Middle East to providing an RN presence at the world's largest defence

exhibition.

"We have also had time to retain links with our extremely important affiliations, as well as thank our families and friends for their continued support by hosting them at sea.

"I could not have achieved this without a capable, motivated and thoroughly professional ship's company, all whom have faced the challenges and demands of our incredibly busy programme with a characteristic smile and

'can-do' attitude."

Sutherland's time out of action in Devonport will see her receive numerous upgrades to help maintain her on front-line operations for many years to come (she's not due to retire

until 2033).

Among various enhancements, she'll receive the new DNA(2) Command System – the brains of her warfare systems which meshes together all the information about threats in the

air, on the sea and beneath the surface – a new radar to pick out those surface and aerial threats, and a ship-wide improvement of the standard computer system used by the ship's company for day-to-day business.

New Vigilant era

WITH the waters of the Clyde parting over her bow, the Navy's most powerful warship returns to base after completing the nation's ultimate mission.

HMS Vigilant has finished her first nuclear deterrent patrol since refit, the pinnacle of a five-year and multi-million pound programme to overhaul the submarine ready for operations into the mid-2020s.

For three months, the 16,000-tonne leviathan – one of four Vanguard-class boats charged with upholding the UK's nuclear deterrent, Operation Relentless – lurked somewhere beneath the surface of the Seven Seas before emerging in the Clyde to be escorted back to Faslane.

Throughout the 14-week patrol, the boat remained submerged, with the crew's only contact with home a weekly 120-word 'family gram' – to which they are unable to reply.

The submarine rejoined her two older sisters Vanguard and Victorious in the deterrent cycle earlier this year (boat No.4 Vengeance is in refit) after completing a £333m upgrade of her systems and the refuelling of her nuclear reactor.

In all some 2.3 million man hours (more than 37½ years) were spent revamping Vigilant before she sailed from Devonport to begin her regeneration – regeneration which culminated in the test firing of a dummy Trident II D5 missile off the eastern seaboard of the USA.

As well as living up to their motto – Vigilant and Resolute – during the patrol, the 130 crew aboard found they had time and money to donate more than £3,000 to charity.

The submariners staged various events – an iron man competition, horse racing, even a golf tournament.

The cash raised is being distributed among Cancer Research UK, Dunfermline Youth Rugby Football Club, worthy causes on the Isle of Man (Vigilant's affiliate) and the Sandpiper Trust, which supports life-saving care in rural Scotland.

"Whilst a noble sacrifice is made by all submariners whilst on patrol, the fundraising events not only provided some relief whilst away, but have helped us to support the community we serve," said Lt Dean Ingram, Vigilant's operations Officer.

His Commanding Officer, Cdr John Livesey, added: "On patrol it is important to maintain morale while staying fully focused on the task in hand. I am delighted with the admirable generosity of my crew and the valuable charity work we are supporting."

He was one of two members of the crew to earn their gold 'bomber pins' during the deployment, having completed their 20th deterrent patrol – equating to more than five years under the water.

And Vigilant celebrated her own milestone during the first patrol of her new commission: her 18th birthday (October 14). It was celebrated with a gigantic V-boat-shaped chocolate cake.

From Duncan to Dun-gun

WITH a flash of fire exploding from the muzzle, a shell leaves the main gun of new destroyer HMS Duncan for the first time.

Over the past few weeks Britain's sixth and final Type 45 destroyer has been testing her advanced gunnery systems off the Dorset coast – the first occasion when she's truly proven she's a warship.

Every one of the Portsmouth-based warship's guns was fired, from her hand-held General Purpose Machine-Guns and Miniguns, through the 30mm automated cannon and the 'crowdpleaser', Duncan's 4.5in main gun which can hurl a 40kg high-explosive shell more than a dozen miles.

After arriving in her home base for the first time in March and commissioning in September, Duncan – named after the Scottish admiral who decisively beat the Dutch Fleet at Camperdown in 1797 – has been preparing to join her five sisters on the front-line.

Key to any future deployment is Duncan's ability of the guns



to provide accurate and effective firepower – hence several days on the ranges in the Channel for what's known as Sea Acceptance Trials (Gunnery).

In Duncan's spacious, hi-tech operations room Lt Tuijo 'TJ' Thompson – a Royal New Zealand Navy officer on exchange – the ship's principal warfare officer took charge, ensuring the destroyer was in a safe position to operate the weaponry and fire it at selected targets.

In support of any firings by the 4.5in 'Kryten' (so named for its angular casing resembles the Red Dwarf character of the same name) PO 'Daz' Hickling, the captain of the turret, sat in the gunbay beneath the weapon overseeing the safe loading and operation of the main gun as it hammered away.

Duncan was making use of the ranges off Weymouth, run by 148 Battery Royal Artillery, an Army Commando unit who help

to target the guns of the Fleet in times of war such as Libya and Iraq.

"They were very impressed by the ship's display of Naval Gunfire Support, stating it was the best they had seen in years – not bad for Duncan's first effort under the White Ensign," said Cdr James Stride, the destroyer's Commanding Officer.

The 30mm cannon shoot proved particularly successful – Duncan became the first Type 45 destroyer to successfully engage an aerial towed target.

Just for good measure, the machine-guns and Minigun (a manually-operated Gatling gun) were flashed up under the supervision of experienced gunner PO(AWW) Jamie Phillips.

"By proving that her various guns work as they were designed to do, Duncan will now be able to go on to support operations worldwide by providing Naval Gunfire Support to forces ashore, engaging surface targets that pose a threat, and play a part in defending the ship from air attack," Cdr Stride added.



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Lightning strikes tank

A GUIDED weapon has been successfully launched from the Navy's next-generation strike fighter for the first time.

A whirlwind of sand, dirt and iron devoured an M60 tank on a range in California after an F35B – the jump jet variant which will be flown by Royal Navy and RAF aviators from the decks of HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales – released a 500lb Paveway guided bomb some 25,000 feet above the Mojave Desert.

A laser seeker and fins attached to the bomb – which did not contain any explosive on this test – helped guide the weapon on to its target, an old Patton tank on the 'precision impact range' at the legendary Edwards Air Force Base, about 100 miles north of Los Angeles.

The test was carried out by the US Marine Corps – which is carrying out trials and training on the F35 Lightning II alongside British air and ground crew.

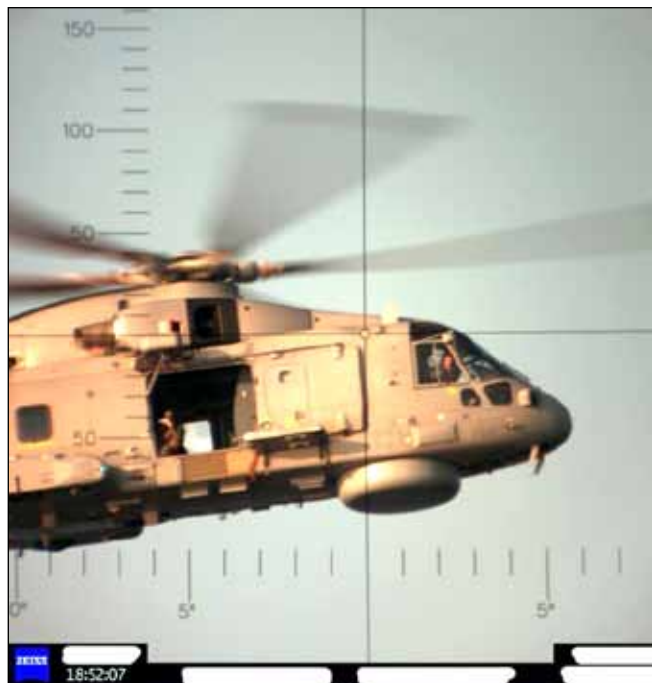
The Paveway is a standard air-to-ground weapon used by the UK's fast jets: Fleet Air Arm and RAF Harriers (until they were decommissioned in 2010) and RAF Tornados and Typhoons.

On the Lightning II, however, the bomb isn't slung on a pylon beneath the wings, but held in an internal weapons bay, which reduces the strike fighter's radar signature and enhances its stealth.

During the test bombing in California, pilot Maj Richard Rusnok of the US Marine Corps identified, tracked and finally guided the Paveway on to the tank using the F35's electro-optical targeting system.

The moment of impact, he said, "marks the first time the F35 truly became a weapon system".

Queen Elizabeth passes construction milestone – page 8



New Merlin's spell of sub hunting

THIS is the sight of the Royal Navy's latest weapon in the never-ending game between submarine and submarine hunter.

Seen through the lens of a periscope, this is the second-generation Merlin helicopter hunting its foe.

The aircraft locked horns with HMS Triumph off the west coast of Scotland – as the hunter-killer boat hosted the would-be submarine commanders of tomorrow.

Merlin is undergoing a £750m revamp to turn the original model into the Mk2, with the first aircraft in the hands of 824 Naval Air Squadron based at Culdrose.

Outwardly, the Mk2 looks little different from the Mk1, which has been in service with the Royal Navy for more than a decade.

But inside, the heart of the Mk1 was ripped out and a new cockpit and command system installed, making the art of both flying the helicopter and hunting down submarines or surface targets easier for the crew.

Much of the work to prepare the new helicopter for front-line duties has been concentrated over the Western Approaches, close to 824's base at Helston.

With Cornwall shrouded in fog, 824 detached its 'Sea Flight', commanded by Lt Cdr Paul 'Bernie' Winterton, to HMS Gannet in Prestwick.

From there it's a short hop

to the Clyde exercise areas, ranging from Belfast in the south to the Isle of Bute in the north, scanning the sea areas in between with the Merlin's new active and passive sonar.

The aircraft's above and below-surface surveillance systems were put to the test by Triumph – undergoing the Submarine Commanding Officers Qualifying Course, better known as the Perisher, which determines whether submariners have 'the right stuff' to be in charge of one of the Royal Navy's nuclear-powered boats.

"The exercise provided an ideal chance for the Merlin MK2 to prove itself against a very capable boat in challenging conditions," said Lt Cdr Winterton.

"The results are a good indication to us as operators that the system upgrade programme has taken the capability of Merlin in the right direction."

There's constant training for 824 through the closing months of 2013 and into 2014, including joining RFA Argus as *Navy News* went to press for at-sea training.

Next year the first batch of observers and pilots straight from basic training will receive their Merlin instruction.

820 Naval Air Squadron will be the first of the three front-line Merlin units – 814 and 829 complete the trio – to fly the Mk2 on operations. Its personnel are going through conversion training now.



A MIGHTY Russian man o'war and a Royal Navy escort in close company in the Iceland Gap – that takes us back a bit.

On the left is the flagship of the Russian Federation's Northern Fleet, Pyotr Velikiy (Russian for 'Peter the Great'). On the right, Her Majesty's Ship Northumberland.

Somewhere at 60° North, between the Shetlands and Faroes, the two met up after Northumberland (her badge features a ferocious blue lion, if you were wondering about the headline...) broke away from training exercises for the chance of a rare encounter with the Russian leviathan.

Nuclear-powered RFS Pyotr Velikiy is officially an atomic guided-missile cruiser – although many refer to the 25,000-tonne warship as a modern-day battle-cruiser.

Whatever her name or designation, she's

pretty much the most powerful surface ship in the world after an aircraft carrier. She's also five times heavier and nearly 400ft longer than the Devonport-based frigate.

As Northumberland sped to meet the battle-cruiser, the captain of the Pyotr Velikiy approved her request to hold a co-ordinated approach with the Merlin capturing the two ships sailing together.

"I am very grateful to the captain of the Pyotr Velikiy for allowing this exchange, and while HMS Northumberland is only half the size, from the air we looked like a formidable pair," said Cdr Tristram Kirkwood, Northumberland's CO.

"My ship's company very much enjoyed the opportunity to interact with such an impressive battle-cruiser."

It's the second time in as many weeks

that Northumberland has worked with the Russian Navy.

The frigate and the Russian destroyer Soobrazitelny took part in the Irish Naval Fleet Review during a visit to Cork. During the visit Cdr Kirkwood was invited aboard her Russian counterpart for a tour by Capt Viktoriy Tcherokov.

As part of the visit both Cdr Kirkwood and Capt Tcherokov presented each other with crests, and shared a discussion on their common aims of tackling crime on the high seas, protecting legitimate maritime traffic and deterring those who commit illegal acts in international waters.

Both ships then worked together on exercises in ship handling and search and rescue techniques, using Northumberland's Merlin.

Cloudy with the chance of a Type 23 frigate...

THERE'S something rather ominous about this image of the clouds devouring the upper reaches of one of the most remote inhabited islands in the world as HMS Richmond approaches.

This is Tristan da Cunha, blessed with a two-day visit from the frigate on the latest stage of her Atlantic deployment.

As with all Royal Navy vessels who call at Tristan, which lies 1,750 miles from South Africa and more than 2,000 miles from South America (the nearest inhabited locality is another British Overseas Territory, St Helena, a mere 1,510 miles away), the frigate had to anchor offshore – the harbour at the island's capital, Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, is too small to accommodate a Type 23.

After the smattering of people at Richmond's last port of call, snow-capped South Georgia (about a dozen souls), Edinburgh of the Seven Seas is a positive metropolis with a population of 275, who lead a mostly-self-supporting life farming.

On the first day of Richmond's visit, her CO Cdr Rob Pedre welcomed aboard the island's

administrator and magistrate, Alex Mitham, and its police officer, Inspector Conrad Glass, to highlight some of the important roles that the Royal Navy undertakes in the South Atlantic.

The islanders reciprocated the hospitality on the second day with a reception at the administrator's residence for a number of the ship's company whilst the Commanding Officer was hosted by Mr Mitham and was able to enjoy a guided tour of the island – which is about seven miles in diameter.

Unfortunately, due to poor weather, a planned golf and football match had to be cancelled, although the Portsmouth-based frigate's 815 NAS Lynx did make the short hop ashore.

"It has been a great privilege taking HMS Richmond to the remotest British Overseas Territory in the world," said Cdr Pedre.

"We have reassured the local British citizens that live in Tristan da Cunha and my ship's company have enjoyed witnessing an island that few people ever get to see."

Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Weatherston, HMS Richmond



Ledbury joins Jazz club

YOU never realised until now, but Poland is the home of jazz.

Steadfast Jazz that is, NATO's biggest exercise in seven years involving around 6,000 military personnel from across the alliance.

Forty-five of those 6,000 people were aboard HMS Ledbury, the Royal Navy's input to the fortnight-long exercise which ranged from Pomeranian Poland in the west to the Gulf of Riga in Latvia in the east – over 400 miles away.

The naval phase of the exercise was focused in the Bay of Gdansk and the port of Gdynia, to which Ledbury headed in a five-day passage from her home base of Portsmouth to the Baltic.

Crossing the North Sea, the ship paused over the wrecks of the Grand Fleet lost at Jutland 97 years ago – sunk in the greatest naval battle ever fought in European waters.

As Ledbury passed over the Jutland Bank, a brief memorial service was held during which members of the ship's company read out individual medal citations for courageous actions during the battle.

Once safely arrived in Gdynia naval base Ledbury's sailors lined up alongside like-minded comrades from Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway and the host nation for a parade celebrating 40 years of NATO's permanent minehunting forces.

Senior officers from Canada and Poland stressed the importance of the alliance's two minehunting groups which roam around European waters all year.

As for the week-long naval phase of Steadfast Jazz, Ledbury joined a sizeable force which was led by Dutch frigate HNLMS De Ruyter and also comprised Polish submarine ORP Sokol, Italian destroyer ITS Caio Duilio, Polish frigate ORP Kosciuszko and SNMCMG1 command ship ORP Czernicki joined by seven minehunters from Belgium, Estonia (ENS Admiral Cowan – formerly HMS Sandown) – Germany, the Netherlands, and Poland.

GET your motor runnin'.

Head out on the, er, dust track. Leaving trails of dust across the Omani desert is the heavy metal thunder of the Royal Marines: the Vikings of the Corps' Armoured Support Group.

Sixteen of the Royal Marines' armoured vehicles have deployed with the RN's Cougar 13 task group to give the rest of the commandos a taste of what the Viking can bring to the battlefield.

It offers armoured protection for green berets, fire support in the form of a machine-gun and a mortar in some variants, and battlefield mobility in place of yomping.

Which is exactly what happened in the latest stage of the task force's deployment, Omani Cougar, a six-day exercise in the Middle Eastern nation.

The Vikings, which are based at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset and the Army's Bovington ranges in Dorset, have already rumbled around the Albanian foothills and 'swum' through lakes and rivers.

In the sands of Oman they joined Juliet Company 42 Commando in a dawn raid and some live firing and manoeuvre training.

"The opportunity to practise live firing whilst integrated with Viking has been fantastic – and the austere environment has added to the realism," said Capt Chris Stevens RM, Second in Command of Juliet Coy.

"We simply do not get opportunities to train like this back in the UK."

The Bickleigh-based Royals have also been toiling in 30°C heat by day in a bespoke training 'village' which has been specially constructed to test troops in urban warfare – aka FISHing (Fighting In Someone's House).

The mock village has multi-level compounds and tunnel systems between buildings which troops have to find and use to their advantage.

Offshore, flagship HMS Bulwark and helicopter carrier HMS Illustrious, plus amphibious support ship RFA Mounts Bay worked side-by-side with five Omani warships.

Illustrious had to fend off a succession of attacks from Omani jets day after day during the opening stages of the exercise – and still put Royal Marines ashore on the sands of Oman.

The Royal Omani Air Force provided some of the 'opposition', sending its Jaguar and Hawks to attack Illustrious –

one of the 'high value assets' during the exercise which had to be protected at all costs.

As one of the largest vessels in the Fleet – 22,000 tonnes, nearly 650ft long – the helicopter carrier presented a substantial target to the attacking bombers.

Omani warships provided the outer layer of defence for the duration of the exercise – the Al Muazzar, Al Munassir, Al Najah, Al Sharqayah and Al Mussandam – and proved to be extremely effective.

But to ensure the carrier's weapons systems, gunners, stokers and bridge team were also tested, some of the bombers got through.

All four Olympus gas turbines were cranked up to full power – pushing the carrier through the Arabian Sea at over 28 knots.

At that speed, the Olympuses – the naval version of the engines which powered Concorde – are consuming one gallon of fuel for every foot Illustrious moves through the water.

As well as thrashing her engines, the carrier zig-zagged wildly.

In addition to evasive manoeuvres, the ship has automated and manual guns to knock aircraft and missiles out of the sky.

Illustrious' most effective defensive shield are Goalkeepers, seven-barrelled Gatling guns which can track up to 15 targets at the same time, deciding which ones are the most dangerous before engaging them at ranges up to 1,500 metres (just short of a mile).

When they do engage, they spew out 30mm shells at the rate of 70 rounds per second – a wall of steel which can potentially stop incoming missiles, jets, even bombs.

"Over the course of Omani Cougar, we had air defence exercises almost every day," said Lieutenant Commander Steve Munday, whose weapon engineering department is responsible for the ship's weapon systems and sensors.

"The Jaguars were good as they fly in much faster than the Hawks we usually exercise with during training in the UK."

As for the wider benefits of Omani Cougar, Illustrious' Commanding Officer Capt Mike Utley said he'd been "tremendously impressed" by the eight-day workout.



"Our hosts planned a very-well-thought-out exercise to meet specific objectives, which they executed in a very professional manner indeed," he added.

"It has been a genuine pleasure to meet so many of our Omani colleagues and strengthen our bonds with one of our closest allies."

Omani Cougar was the last major set-piece exercise for the UK Response Force Task Group east of Suez as part of its annual work out, having previously conducted similar exercises with the Saudis (Red Alligator) and the military of the United Arab Emirates (Sea Khanjar).

"Each exercise we've undertaken has taught us something new, whether it be the impact of the environment on our people and ships, or the challenges we face in sustaining a task group thousands of miles from our home waters," said Cdre Paddy McAlpine, task group commander based in Bulwark.

With Omani Cougar over, Bulwark made for Karachi, while Lusty briefly joined the fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean before being diverted to the Philippines on disaster relief duties (see the centre pages).

Picture: LA(Phot) Jason Ballard, 42 Cdo

In the sands of Oman



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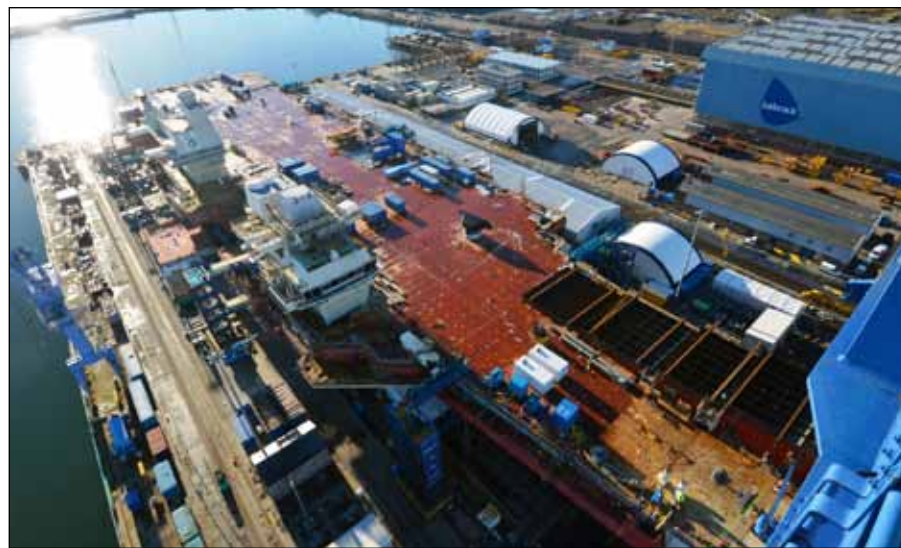
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● The Goliath crane picks up the final piece of the ramp ready to lift it into place and (below) hydraulic jacks move one of Queen Elizabeth's rudders into position
Pictures: Aircraft Carrier Alliance



Asset management

HALF way up one of the many gantries around No.1 Dry Dock in Rosyth – just about the time you're getting a bit out of breath thanks to all those steps – there's a large sign: *Jets will fly from this ship in 2018.*

It seems like a long way away (2018, not the hike to the top of the Saturn V-esque gantry...), writes Richard Hargreaves.

But every quarter, every month, pretty much every week of the life of HMS Queen Elizabeth between now and then is planned with targets to hit.

From the RN point of view, much of our interest in the future flagship has been about what she'll bring – huge flight deck, stealthy strike fighters, hi-tech kit, biggest warship ever built in Blighty, one giant slab of sovereign UK territory capable of going pretty much anywhere on the Seven Seas to influence world events.

What we've not really touched upon is the sheer complexity of putting her together. Fifty-two segments built in six yards around the land – the bow in Devon, the islands in Portsmouth, hull sections on the Clyde, Solent and Tyneside. All built with millimetric precision, shipped to Rosyth for assembly.

There are sub-contractors from Aberdeen to the south Devonshire coast, South Wales to East Anglia. It's a national effort for a national asset.

With the new Forth road crossing – literally just a few hundred yards downstream from Rosyth – construction of the two carriers is the largest and most complex engineering project in the land.

Just as the doommongers were out in force ahead of the Olympics, much of the media attention has been on costs, delays, problems.

But you know what? The Olympics turned out quite nicely...

And – even to the least jingoistic-minded person – one sight of HMS Queen Elizabeth and it does rather make you proud to be British.

Now just imagine her squeezing between Round Tower and Fort Blockhouse, a huge battle ensign billowing in the stiff Solent breeze...

Right now, that does take some imagining. She's more building site than warship.

There's constant grinding, banging, sawing, ratcheting. Sparks from welders cascade in stairwells, while acetylene torches cut through steel.

Forests of scaffolding support both the bow and stern – there can hardly be any planks or piping left in Scotland for any other building projects.

The flight and hangar decks are littered with portable cabins and containers. Wooden crates everywhere. There are cherry pickers. Fork-lift trucks. Even a low-loader crane. Reversing vehicles beep constantly. Cables, pipes and leads snake across the decks. Vending machines dispense not Mars bars or plastic cups of coffee but drill bits, marker pens and screwdrivers.

And then there's the army of Bob the Builders in their overalls and helmets buzzing around. Two thousand of them on an average day. Another 1,000 supporting them alongside.

To the uninitiated, it looks very busy... and somewhat chaotic.

"You'll look at something and say: this will never be ready one time," says PO 'Hammy' Hamilton, who previously joined HMS Daring while she was being built.

"But then suddenly, they'll throw people at it. Next thing you know it's ready. They are working around the clock.

"Every time you come on board there's something completed, some new item which has appeared."

New in November 2013, the ski ramp. Complete. The very last piece of the hull jigsaw – Block No.52 – to slot (actually

lowered) into place, courtesy of the enormous Goliath crane which dominates the north shore of the Forth.

As pieces of QE go the ramp is a relative tiddler; the final segment a 'mere' 130 tonnes. The finished ramp stands more than six metres (20ft) high, although at 300 tonnes the completed structure weighs less than half of one per cent of the total displacement of Queen Elizabeth: 65,000 tonnes.

Its installation signals the end of an important chapter in the construction of the nation's flagships. Only the aircraft lifts and the radar remain to be lifted into place by Goliath.

"This event means a pivotal chapter in the delivery of HMS Queen Elizabeth has been completed. The ship here in the dock is a truly magnificent sight," says Ian Booth, programme director of the Aircraft Carrier Alliance, the coalition of MOD, Royal Navy and industry which is building Queen Elizabeth and her sister Prince of Wales.

"Everyone involved in the programme to deliver HMS Queen Elizabeth should feel tremendously proud of what we have all achieved to get to this point."

"This point" is four and a half years since the first steel was cut. Other dates for your diaries: launch in July 2014 – when the dock will be flooded up for the first time. The crew move aboard in May 2016. Sea trials begin in October of that year. A first appearance in Portsmouth around the turn of 2016/17. Lightning II trials in 2018. An operational flagship in 2020.

There's been a ship's company – based in Lowden Building, one dry dock and about five minutes' walk away from the carrier herself – for more than a year. Currently 50 strong, their numbers will quadruple by the end of 2014.

"People ask: what are we doing here? Operations are seven years away," says Cdr Steve Lynn, Queen Elizabeth's head of weapon engineering.

"But we need to learn about the ship, we need to know what she can do. Yes a lot of the technology is the same as on a Type 45, but the scale of this is just immense."

QE's first complement have the opportunity to both 'write the manual' – they're working hand-in-hand with the shipwrights and technicians on getting the carrier's systems to talk to each other and operate – and set the feel of the ship (which will, of course, be rather easier when they move aboard in two-and-a-half years' time).

"It's a complete privilege to be involved," says Cdr Lynn. "I get excited about what's happening next week, let alone next year.

"My guys love it. They get to be involved, they get their hands on things which they'd not normally do, and they've got the chance to influence the ship and how she operates."

Even a cursory tour – with many sections blocked off due to the construction work – reveals one immediate problem: it's going to be tough finding your way around. One solution might be QR codes which could be read by an electronic device to help you get your bearings.

Sound a bit OTT? Maybe. But Queen Elizabeth is the RN super-sized.

The flight deck on Illustrious is one third of the width. Stand on QE's bridge roof and you're level with the top of the gym at Caledonia, a mile or so away, while the decommissioned R-boat in the adjacent dry dock looks like a Dinky toy.

The junior rates dining hall will seat 250 sailors at one go. There are more than 3,000 compartments, 1,600 bunks, 470 cabins (each one with a display screen for information, daily orders, or you can plug in your games system for fun).

Like Bulwark, Albion and the Bays, there are wide assault routes for fully-kitted-out troops to move easily from their quarters –

which can easily accommodate 250 men – to waiting helicopters.

As the nation's flagship, there's going to be a lot of interest shown in QE, so there's a media centre. And as she's likely to go into battle at some stage during her 50-year lifespan, a chapel for moments of reflection and spirituality.

It's not the only quiet room aboard the carriers. 'Acoustic shelters' – the F35 is very noisy – are provided so chockheads and bombheads can chill out. And there's a huge mission complex suite for aircrew to plan their sorties, get their kit, survival equipment and the like.

The hangar stretches for 168 metres – 551ft, or 50ft longer than a Type 45 destroyer, nearly 120ft longer than a Type 23. "We reckon it would take Usain Bolt about 18 seconds to run it," Cdr Lynn points out. (He's due in Scotland for the Commonwealth Games next summer. Stock up on chicken nuggets on board and maybe he might be tempted to run it...)

The combat systems on board are served by 197 miles of cable – which would stretch from London to Liverpool – while a further 1,300 miles of electrical cabling (enough to link London with the northern Norwegian city of Tromsø) serve the more general needs of the ship's company.

Data – emails, images, orders, signals, live feeds from aircraft and drones – are crucial both to the battles of tomorrow and maintaining morale aboard. Initially, Queen Elizabeth will have about 8mb – basic broadband at home is about 200kb per second, while American carriers can cope with about 4.5mb of data. In the long term, there's the potential to cope with 80mb (which is about the equivalent of streaming two Blu-Ray films simultaneously...).

When they're powered up, the carrier's gas turbines and diesel generators will produce enough 'juice' to run a town the size of Swindon – just under 190,000 souls (Daring can only power Bedford, pop.80,000).

This super-sizing does pose problems. Each one of the 680 or so crew will eventually be responsible for 96 tonnes of the carrier. That's four times more than on a Type 23. Twice as much as on a Type 45.

"It would take two and a half days just to do the rounds of the air treatment plants," says Cdr Lynn – there are 27 miles of ventilation ducting running around Queen Elizabeth to keep the computer systems (and ship's company) cool.

"We'll have to do things differently and that means a change in mentality. There are a lot of things which the Navy has done for decades which are ripe for review."

There will be a lot of automation – automated fire-fighting systems, CCTV cameras monitoring areas. The head of marine engineering will be able to sit in the ops room and read a sensor on a specific gas turbine, should they so wish.

And you'll be able to 'dial a bomb' when arming the aircraft. Armourers will tell the system which weapon they want for the latest Lightning II mission and it will deliver it via lifts and rails to the prepping area below the flight deck. "The software which drives it is a bit like the Amazon warehouse," says Cdr Lynn. "None of that man-handling of weapons. There's nothing like it that we know of, and it'll save about 70 crew."

It's still quite hard to envisage bombs and missile pods in here – in fact it's still quite hard to imagine much of QE as a living, breathing warship. Most of the decks are covered in matting, the instruments on the bridge are hidden by wooden crates, much of what has been installed is in protective wrapping, various compartments and sections are sealed off with crime-scene-esque tape.

It'll be fun taking it all off. Like Christmas has come early...



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JAWSSNAPPINGSHUT

WITH the morning mist still hugging the hollows of the rugged Californian terrain, a band of brothers that is the Royal Marines moves out to begin an assault at first light on an enemy village – as two months of live-fire training draw to a close.

The green berets of 40 Commando decamped from their Norton Manor base in Somerset to the massive US Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Centre range in Twentynine Palms, a couple of hours' drive from Los Angeles.

Exercise Black Alligator (which is the only alligator to be found in the Mojave Desert...) moved into its final stages with an all-out assault on a mock-up village.

To retain their annual marksmanship qualification, the commandos have

to undergo a combined arms live fire exercise, the final part of the live-fire training package.

And what a live-fire training package. Two companies fighting alongside US Marine Corps M1 Abrams main battle tanks, with fire support from mortars, artillery, and heavy weapons mounted on American Humvees as they converged on a mock enemy village. Basically the sort of thing you would normally only see in the movies...

"Going through a live firing attack while having an M1 Abrams tank firing a few feet away was brilliant. It's great to be involved in an exercise on such a large scale. The Americans don't do things by halves," said 27-year-old Mne Nick Locke, from Caerphilly.

"Live firing was going on all around me, from machine guns to mortars. It's as close to a real-life operation as

you can get – not to mention the great weather."

The raid was, says Capt Russ Squires, "very impressive, watching two companies advance on the village at first light, being fired in by the incredible ordnance of battle tanks and Fire Support Group gunners."

He continued: "The transformation of the group from a start state of basic marksmanship to a full commando attack is incredible."

"It's testament to the level of instruction; the professionalism of the marines, soldiers, and sappers; and the superb ranges available here in the USA."

The Royals are regular users of Twentynine Palms. At over 930 square miles in extent – that's nearly twice the size of Greater Manchester – the ranges allow the green berets to let rip on a scale simply unimaginable on

home soil.

"We do not have ranges like this back in the UK," says Capt Tristan Stewart, 40's training officer.

"The terrain here is challenging, so it makes for an effective teaching tool. It's great to see the Marines getting the most with this training."

In addition to the regular green berets on Black Alligator, 31 Royal Marines Reservists from across the land joined the training in the Mojave desert.

"What I really liked was the integration, the fact that we undertook every element of the training just like the regular marines," said Mne Simon Avery, who by day works for the National Trust.

"As reservists we need to gain experience – the more we train and practise, the more successful we will be in operations, and at the US facility

we were at the forefront of training."

And there was plenty to practise at Twentynine Palms: live firing with heavy machine guns and mortars; perfecting urban combat drills; a battlegroup-sized live-fire commando raid, all while working side-by-side with their US and Dutch colleagues.

For 40, Black Alligator was just one strand of a comprehensive training package which will allow the Somerset unit to take over from 42 Cdo as the UK's Lead Commando Group – the on-call Royal Marines unit which is at short notice to deploy around the world – in the spring.

Other training includes cold weather and jungle warfare, which the Norton Manor men will undertake early next year.

✉ RMR on Black Alligator, page 33

Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clee, RNPOTYx3

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Mixing it up in the Med

YOU can say many things about a deployment but 'sameish' isn't normally an apposite adjective (unless you're on a bomber...).

The final weeks of Dragon's eight-month maiden tour of duty have probably proved to be the most varied (certainly more so than five months patrolling the Gulf).

Two Mediterranean islands. Four dogs. Fourteen Wrens. One hunter-killer submarine. Three American destroyers. Two brothers. One act of remembrance.

Dogs came in the form of four military canines – Otis, Chox, Ali and Benson – who were sent aboard in Cyprus for a workout in unusual surroundings.

A mock suspicious device was hidden in one of the destroyer's bunk spaces, and Otis and Chox – specialist arms explosive search dogs – were sent in with their handlers Cpl Morris and L/Cpl Jones to help them up and down Dragon's steep ladders.

"There's a huge difference between working in a large open area and the confinements of a ship – different scents, noises and floor surfaces, let alone expecting the handlers to carry up to 40kg of wriggling, and in some cases growling, dogs up and down the narrow hatches and steep ladders," explained Sgt Andrew Shaw, the chief trainer with the Cyprus Military Working Dogs Squadron.

"But the dogs responded really well to the new challenges, jumping at the chance to search every nook and cranny, and we would be keen to go back for more as it is invaluable training for both the handlers and the animals."

Ali (a Belgian Shepherd) and Benson (a German Shepherd) were let loose on an intruder.

Sgt Shaw donned a padded suit, hid in a berth and challenged the patrol dog detachment to take him down.

"Luckily Sgt Shaw was wearing a padded suit as a military working dog delivers 238 pounds per square inch in a bite!" said Ali's handler, L/Cpl Jones.

Next stop Naples – but the waters between Cyprus and Campania are fraught with danger – particularly if there's a T-boat lurking.

Like, say, HMS Talent, which was the target of the attentions of not just Dragon, but three Arleigh Burke-class destroyers – US Ships Gravelly, Stout and Barry.

They knew where the boat wanted to go, and during a 12-hour game of cat and mouse, did everything in the power to stop Talent reaching her

destination.

Ahead of the exercise, several crew from Talent and Dragon traded places to gain an insight into the different ways the units hunt each other down.

Twenty-five-year-old ET(MESM) Michael Williams took the opportunity to leave the cramped confines of the T-boat to tour the more spacious surroundings of Dragon, hosted by his brother LET(WE) Stuart Williams, whom he hadn't seen in over eight months.

"This is my first operational patrol and it has been an unexpected surprise to be able to get together with Stuart," said the submariner, who joined the Service just 14 months ago.

"As a lower level engineer working six hours on and six off, the space to work in on board Talent is very limited and a real challenge. There is so much more room on Dragon to work."

"I think it's fair to say that the living conditions are more comfortable onboard HMS Dragon – but the food on board HMS Talent wins that contest."

Heading in the opposite direction for a couple of days in a big black tube was 29-year-old LET(ME) David Cantrell.

"It was a real eye-opener for me. The living conditions were cramped but comfortable – with fantastic food," he said.

"The working routines are particular to operating a submarine, and everyone onboard was very professional in their approach and application to everything they did."

"The biggest surprise for me was how stable Talent was once dived – you get used to the motion of the sea aboard ship, but once underwater there wasn't a hint of movement."

NOW arriving safely in port is always worth celebrating, especially if you've run the submarine gauntlet.

So once alongside in Naples, 14 female members of the ship's company lined the gangway and doffed caps in joy (they don't do this in every port, admittedly).

To mark 20 years since the Women's Royal Naval Service – aka the Wrens – passed into history, female Dragons recreated a famous shot from recent RN history: the first seagoing Wrens joyfully offing caps when they joined HMS Brilliant on an autumn day in Devonport.

Roughly one in five of the sailors aboard Dragon is female

Pictures: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins, RN Photographer of the Year

– officers and ratings, chefs, communications specialists, supply experts, engineers, warfare and weapons specialists – and a few go back to those pioneering days of women at sea.

"When I signed up, I joined the WRNS, simple as that," said communications systems expert PO(CIS) Lavina Sparling.

"It hadn't occurred to me that one afternoon whilst at HMS Raleigh, I would be summoned to Dauntless Block to be told that women were going to sea for the first time. That was it. I've been in the sea-going Navy ever since and loved being at sea."

As well as recreating the iconic photograph, the female members of Dragon's ship's company held a commemorative church service aboard to celebrate the efforts and contribution women have made to the Naval Service with visiting chaplain Benjamin Box from the US Navy officiating; Dragon has recently been working with his ship, the super-carrier USS Nimitz.

For the next religious proceedings, it was Dragon's padre, the Rev James Francis, leading worshippers – a drumhead ceremony at sea off Malta on Remembrance Sunday.

The majority of the ship's company mustered on the flight deck with Dragon's bell serving as the centrepiece of the short service to honour the fallen.

Barely had a wreath been laid and ceremonies ended than the fine blue Mediterranean skies began to cloud over for her entry to Valletta.

Although Daring and Diamond passed this way on their maiden deployments last year, they didn't sail into Grand Harbour.

So it was left to Dragon to become the first Type 45 to visit the island.

Malta was her penultimate port of call before her return to Portsmouth as Navy News was going to press.

Though long, Dragon's inaugural deployment has, says her Commanding Officer Capt Iain Lower, seen the 200 men and women under his charge "rise to every challenge".

He added: "From the first moment I walked onboard, it has been obvious that there is something very special about this ship."

"The spirit, ethos, and people have made her an absolute joy to command over these past eight months."



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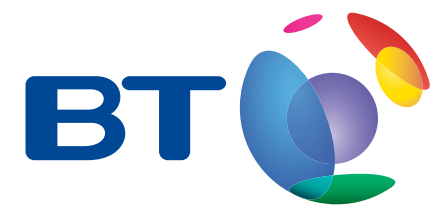
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The revolutionary Queen

PORTSMOUTH Naval Base, Trafalgar Day 1912.

While the great and the good of the Royal Navy were honouring the immortal memory aboard HMS Victory – then a floating hulk in the harbour (and in a rather sorry state) – a short distance away the keel was being laid for the largest, fastest, most powerful battleship ever built.

HMS Queen Elizabeth wouldn't change the face of naval warfare as the 'starting pistol' of the battleship race, HMS Dreadnought, had done barely seven years before.

But she was something of a gamble and a leap into the unknown. Fortunately, it was a gamble which paid off.

In a land where coal was king, it powered pretty much everything: the dark satanic mills, locomotives hauling trains up and down the world's first railway network, and most of the vessels of the world's most powerful navy.

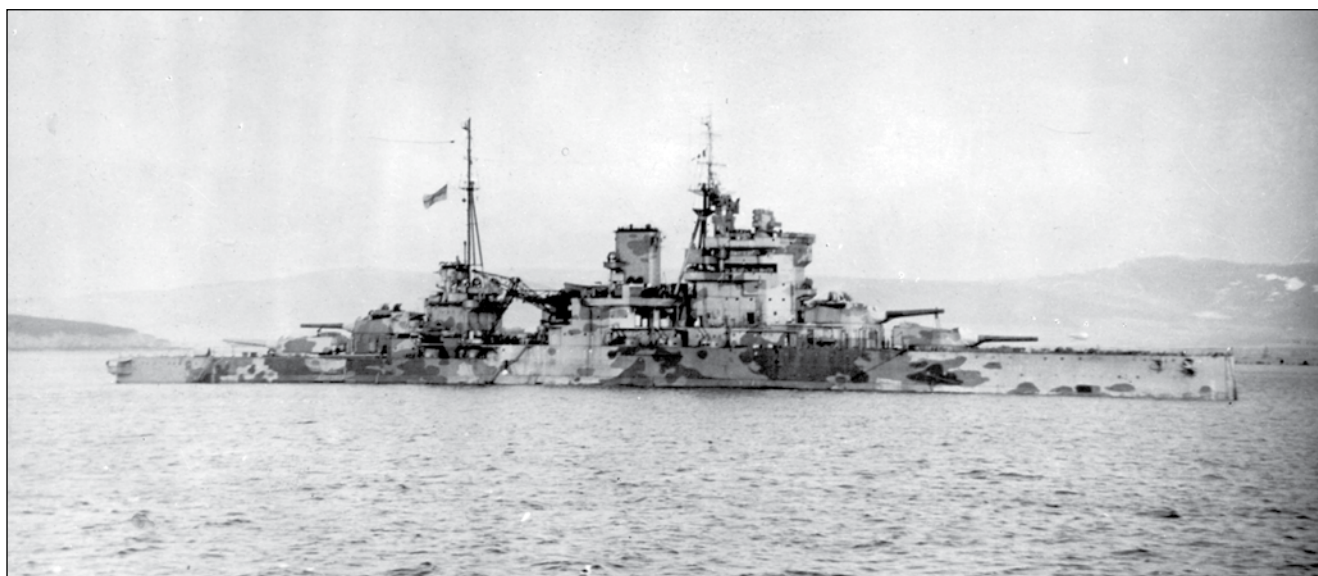
But coal was heavy. It was labour intensive – both coaling ship and stoking the fires. It wasn't particularly efficient.

And it simply couldn't power a super-dreadnought – bigger guns (13.5in was now the standard) and a heavier displacement had added the prefix 'super' to the new breed of battleships – quickly enough for the Admiralty's liking.

The most recent class of battleships, the Iron Dukes, bristled with 10 13.5in guns and weighed in at just under 30,000 tons. Top speed: 21kts.

The Admiralty was hoping for a top speed of 25kts from their successors. And it wanted a punch of eight 15in guns, mounted in twin turrets.

Such guns would deliver a broadside more than twice as heavy as that from Dreadnought's ten 12in barrels.



● HMS Queen Elizabeth in her 1943 configuration in UK waters after extensive repairs following an Italian raid on Alexandria

The 15in would prove to be an outstanding weapon for the next 40 years, propelling a 1,938lb shell out of the barrel at more than twice the speed of sound (1,675mph) and capable of hitting a target nearly 19 miles away.

These decisions ruled out coal as a fuel in favour of oil. But Britain had neither the natural resource nor the infrastructure – tanks, pipes, reserves.

The nation had to look overseas for oil. In doing so, the Government bought a controlling stake in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company – what is today BP – for the not inconsiderable sum of £2.2m (about £100m today).

The switch to oil was a brave – and not especially popular – move.

MPs in coal-mining constituencies protested at

the potential loss of jobs. And newspapers pointed out the vulnerability of transporting oil by tanker from the Gulf to the UK, especially in time of war (a factor as important today as it was in 1912).

The dire predictions of Fleet Street were never realised, but it was a close-run thing.

Britain never really built up the fuel reserves needed to sustain the Fleet in time of war – and when the unrestricted U-boat campaign was unleashed in 1917, there was a period when the Grand Fleet had barely three weeks of fuel left (and in some bases just a week's supply).

As for the Queen Elizabeths – she was followed by Warspite, Valiant, Barham and Malaya – they proved to be potent men o'war.

All five ships served into World

War 2 – and with distinction. Only Barham was lost (to a U-boat). Warspite earned more battle honours than any other individual ship. Malaya and Valiant both fought at Jutland and later in the Mediterranean theatre in WW2, with Valiant going on to the Far East.

As for the Queen, well she was in action just weeks after commissioning, supporting the ill-prepared landings at Gallipoli.

She missed Jutland through refit, but she was instrumental in the end of the German Fleet; it was aboard Queen Elizabeth that Admiral Beatty laid down the armistice terms to Admiral Meurer.

A few days later the battleship oversaw the mass surrender of the High Sea Fleet – an event known simply as *Der Tag* (The Day).

After spending much of the inter-war period in the Mediterranean (including supporting the non-intervention blockade off Spain during the civil war), Queen Elizabeth missed the first year of WW2 whilst undergoing a massive refit – tantamount to a rebuild – in Portsmouth dockyard.

Once fit for action, she was sent to the Med again, came through the Battle of Crete unscathed (unlike much of the Fleet), and spent the rest of 1941 operating out of Alexandria, where she was crippled that December by Italian human torpedoes.

Patched-up so she could be sent to the USA for permanent repairs, it was late 1943 before Queen Elizabeth could take her place in the order of battle again.

She spent her final active years in the Far East before being



Dardanelles..... 1915
Crete..... 1941
Sabang..... 1944
Burma..... 1944-45
East Indies..... 1945

Class: Queen Elizabeth-class super dreadnought
Pennant number: 00
Builder: Portsmouth dockyard
Laid down: October 21 1912
Launched: October 12 1913
Commissioned: December 22 1914

Displacement: 36,500 tons
Length: 645ft 9in (197m)
Beam: 90ft 6in (27.5m)
Draught: 30ft (9m)
Speed: 24kts
Complement: up to 1,300
Propulsion: 24 boilers powering Parsons steam turbines generating 75,000SHP
Range: 9,000 miles at 12½kts
Armour: From 4in (upper deck) to 13in (belt)
Armament: 8x15in guns in four turrets; 16 x 6in Mk XIII guns; 2 x 3in anti-aircraft guns; 4 x 3lb saluting guns; 4 x 21in torpedo tubes

placed in reserve in the summer of 1945 – she arrived back in Britain on the very day of the Japanese surrender.

Now over 30 years old and unneeded, she was sold for breaking up at Troon in the spring of 1948.



PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES

AS IT'S December we thought we'd bring you an historic image from the archives of the Imperial War Museum with a Christmas theme.

Ok, so there's no tinsel and turkey. But there are bright lights. And a roaring fire (between 27 and 83 million degrees Celsius...).

Off Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean, one of nine hydrogen bombs is detonated during Operation Grapple as Britain sought to join the USA and Soviet Union as a thermonuclear power.

She succeeded. Her scientists ultimately created a weapon with a destructive power of about three megatons (about 200 times more potent than the atomic bomb which laid waste to Hiroshima).

Grapple was a national effort. All three Services were involved in the operation, with around 1,200 people (soldiers, sailors, airmen, civilians) based on Christmas Island itself as the hub of the tests.

A dozen warships and auxiliaries buzzed around the tiny island (ten miles across, eight wide) which lies about 200 miles south of Java, providing logistical support or acting as control ships.

In addition, for eight years – from July 1956 until June 1964 – Royal Navy personnel supported tests with a permanent team ashore: initially Naval Party 2512 (25/12, geddit?), then HMS Resolution (after Capt Cook's vessel which found the island on her famous travels).

Sailors posted to Christmas Island expected to arrive at an idyllic atoll – *South Pacific* was filmed 1,000 miles away on Tioman Island (which isn't actually in the South Pacific...).

For the first sailors to land there, however, Christmas Island was a disappointing rather desolate coral atoll. Flat. Just a few coconut trees. Less-than-friendly crabs. Flies.

Until permanent accommodation was built, the men lived in tents. Food generally wasn't very good (except when the Americans were in town; they came with large steaks). The roads, such as they were, turned into a morass when the rains came... and the sports pitches quickly became swimming pools.

The Army did provide a cinema (seating was a few planks), and you could always take a dip in the ocean (providing you didn't mind a potential encounter with a shark).

As for the nuclear tests – the bombs were detonated about two dozen miles off the island, either slung beneath a balloon or dropped by an aircraft.

Grapple concluded in September 1958, by which time Britain's boffins had perfected their weapon. Never again would the UK carry out nuclear tests in the atmosphere.

As a result, Christmas Island became somewhat quieter. Resolution remained in commission until 1960, after which Naval Party 5555 became the parent unit for the RN's presence on the atoll.

The Americans breathed fresh life into the island in 1962 when they carried out two dozen nuclear tests that summer, after which Christmas Island increasingly became a backwater. The White Ensign was lowered for the final time in June 1964.

■ THIS photograph (TR 65682B) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@IWM.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.





There's Whiskey in the jung-o

WHAT'S the difference between the Ghanaian jungle and the Beninese rainforest?

Well, apart from a couple of hundred miles, not a great deal as the green berets of Whiskey Company, 45 Commando, found on the next stage of their African odyssey with their Dutch *Korps Mariniers* counterparts.

Just in case the Arbroath commandos hadn't learned jungle survival skills in the wet, unforgiving undergrowth of Ghana, C/Sgt David 'Taff' Morris – a jungle warfare instructor for 15 years – was on hand in the wet, unforgiving undergrowth of Benin to impart his experience and knowledge once again.

"I thrive in the jungle. It's the purest form of soldiering. The heat and humidity make it a physically demanding environment to operate in, add to that

the potential for claustrophobia that the jungle can cause in some people and it's a combination of arduous training and a demanding environment.

"If you can do navigation and patrolling in the jungle you can do it anywhere."

As well as negotiating the rainforest, the Royals are expected to be able to fight, leave booby traps for unsuspecting foe, and live off the land by eating a variety of insects, animals and plants.

One of the challenges they were set: look after yourself with no more than webbing, knife and survival tin containing fishing line, animal snares and some 'flint and steel' to start a fire.

Within hours the men had erected shelters from leaves and branches and had their first cups of tea on the go.

"The jungle survival exercise was a

real experience and demonstrated that we need to work on our animal snaring skills. We set a trap but didn't catch anything as our bait was eaten by a local goat," said Capt Chris Sykes-Popham, Whiskey's second in command.

"Fortunately one of the corporals managed to catch three fish so we didn't go hungry."

Two of the newest members of Whiskey Coy had only just completed their initial training in August days before deploying.

"The jungle environment is challenging – it's hot and wet," said Mne Peter Thornton.

"There are bugs everywhere, you've got to have eyes on the back of your head and we had to constantly check each other to ensure we weren't being eaten alive.

"I've really liked going through the countryside and seeing the towns and villages. It's also great meeting the villagers and to work with the local armed forces, it's been a real adventure."

Twenty-year-old Mne Bohdan Whitfield added: "Living in the jungle was extremely tough. The heat just drains you and you need to think constantly about your hydration."

British or Dutch, the principal enemy in the jungle is the jungle itself, as Maj John Van de Dam of 23 Raiding Squadron, *Korps Mariniers*, explains.

"When working in the jungle you have limited visibility which has an impact on your command and control capabilities, your communications and the speed you move – you can only move about five kilometres a day in the jungle.

"So you have to learn how to operate

in this environment. If you don't adhere to these skills you will essentially get eaten by the jungle.

"Skills and drills are just as important here as they are in the Arctic."

After their exertions in the jungle, Dutch and Royal Marines returned to assault ship HNLMS Rotterdam – a larger version of the RFA's Bay class vessels – to refresh, although it didn't quite live up to expectations according to L/Cpl Fernley.

"After eight days of training we were all glad to finally get a proper dhoby and head back to the Rotterdam, with the promise of steak and chips.

"It looked remarkably like ordinary macaroni pasta."

Some people want the moon on a stick...

Pictures: PO(Phot) Wheelie A'Barrow, FRPU East



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'rose in bloom

A LYNX banks sharply as it makes a close pass of a gigantic stricken tanker – while two sea boats come to her aid with engineers and medics aboard.

Filled with liquefied natural gas – vital to the UK's energy needs – the MV Al Safliya is one of 600 large merchant vessels plying its lawful trade in the confined waters of the Gulf.

But what if the 137,000-tonne leviathan were to break down – and then come under terrorist attack.

Such was the premise of Lucky Mariner, a major test of British and US forces to repair and protect two large merchantmen – the other, the MV Maersk California, packed with containers (and a mere tiddler at 26,000 tonnes...).

For the sake of Lucky Mariner, she played the part of a stricken vessel demanding both engineering and medical assistance.

That assistance came courtesy of HMS Montrose – which also faced the challenge of keeping the skies and seas around the tanker safe.

The latter were threatened especially by US Coast Guard cutter Baranof which played the part of a fast attack craft determined to finish off the wounded gas carrier.

Doing its best to parry those lunges was Montrose's 815 NAS Lynx, armed with Sea Skua anti-ship missiles and a .5 calibre machine-gun manned by a Royal Marine.

Lt Kevin Trujillo, Baranof's Commanding Officer, described the Lynx's efforts as "textbook" and "superb".

He added: "It was great flying and truly an enjoyment to watch. My crew said it was the highlight so far this exercise."

Aboard the Al Safliya, Montrose's deputy marine engineer officer Lt Adrian Long and his team were helping the tanker's crew run the gauntlet, while medics tended to the 'injured'.

"It was incredibly interesting to visit the Al Safliya to witness the procedures that they have onboard to protect themselves and to deal with incidents," said Lt Long.

"The crew were very receptive to our ideas and advice, and it is satisfying to know that we are held in high regard for the work we do to keep the merchant fleet safe."

In addition to the ships manoeuvring around the Gulf, the Royal Navy's UK Maritime Trade Operations played a key role in Lucky Mariner.

The Dubai-based organisation is

the principal point of contact for all merchant vessels in the region in distress – as seen in the current Tom Hanks blockbuster *Captain Phillips*.

It passes on information and advice to seafarers and acts as a vital link between naval and merchant ships.

"It was quite an intense couple of days and we all got a lot out of working with our US cousins. Likewise, I think the way we do things was an eye-opening experience for them and they learned a lot too," said Lt Cdr Hannah Mackenzie, in charge of the UKMTO.

Lucky Mariner received the thumbs-up from all participants, who said they learned a great deal from the exercise.

"It's completely different from our day-to-day running but it's nice to be able to test both our reactions and that of the military in supporting us against the backdrop of a realistic scenario," said the chief mate of the Al Safliya.

Montrose received glowing praise for her efforts from US Cdre Joseph Naman, in charge of Destroyer Squadron 50 and Command Task Force 55 (Gulf-based patrol boats), who signalled the frigate: "Your superior performance during Lucky Mariner was impressive."

"This has proved again that together we can execute Maritime Security Operations with a Coalition Force and ensure freedom of movement in the sea lines of communication of our area of responsibility. Well done."

Ok, let's flip things on their head. What if, say, your warship ran into one of those 600 large merchant vessels sailing up and down the Gulf and suffered crippling damage (as HMS Southampton did back in 1988)?

Well, plans are in place for that too.

And so are assets, notably the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's floating workshop, RFA Diligence.

On a day-to-day basis, a ship's marine and weapon engineers should be able to cope with ordinary breakdowns, parts and systems failing.

But catastrophic failures are a different matter. So having 'saved' Montrose from sinking thanks to long-standing damage control techniques (blocks of wood hammered into holes in the hull and the like), the frigate needed outside help to restore her vital machinery and weapons systems.

"Out of the haze of the central Gulf, ploughing her way through the feisty seas and high winds of the seasonal shamal came RFA Diligence to the rescue," said Montrose's weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Tony Marden rather poetically.

Diligence is deployed east of Suez in the long term to provide engineering support to RN vessels operating in the

region (in early November there were nearly a dozen vessels under the White and Blue Ensigns).

Once in range of Montrose, the auxiliary sent across a team of expert salvage engineers from the MOD's Salvage and Maritime Operations Team, who work with the ship's own engineers to assess the situation and advise what repairs are needed to get a stricken vessel going again.

What followed next was a rare – and strange – sight on the Seven Seas, a Royal Navy warship being taken under tow, with Montrose's anchor cable attached to a towline, despite the choppy seas.

Having hauled the 4,500-tonne frigate to more sheltered waters for the repairs to be carried out, there was the even stranger sight of Montrose 'rafting up' (berthing) side-by-side with Diligence.

"There's something odd about standing on my bridge, 50 miles from land, and seeing another ship overhang us," said Cdr James Parkin, Montrose's CO.

"While I hope I never have to call upon the intense damage repair capabilities of a forward repair ship, it's incredibly reassuring to know she exists."

Once rafted up, the RFA became the ultimate support ship for the frigate, providing power, fuel, pressurised air for the warship's machinery, high-pressure salt water for the fire mains and, crucial in the Gulf, chilled air to keep the electronic systems aboard cool. And there was also the skilled hands of the Naval Party 1600, the RN's 'rapid reaction' engineering team who'd deployed for the exercise, to call upon.

"In a real-life incident of this nature, the continuous training means that the initial efforts of the ship's company would save the ship," explained Lt Cdr Fergus Ochtman-Corfe, Montrose's marine engineer officer.

"Having a capability like Diligence, however, coupled with the expertise of the naval party, means that capability can be restored and a quicker return to our tasking assured, which is what we're all about."

The Montrose 'disaster' was the last act of OMAR 13 – Operational Maintenance and Repair – exercise which lived up to expectations, and more, according to Lt Cdr Trevor Bradley, in charge of NP1600.

"I'm thrilled with the level of interaction and proving the concepts and services which we've achieved," he said.

Once she had – for exercise – been restored to rude health, Montrose parted company with Diligence to continue her patrols of the Gulf.



pictures: la(phot) alex knott, hms montrose





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SMALL

Mull of Kintyre, oh mist rolling in from...

And that fast jet barrelling in low across the North Channel as HMS Cattistock and Bangor pirouette to throw the pilot off the trail.

Obviously, that's not quite as poetic as Paul McCartney's lyrics. But the Royal Navy's not in the poetry business.

And picturesque though the Kintyre peninsula is, its waters are perfect for training RN warships (indeed as are many of the lochs and kyles of western Scotland).

This is the domain of the Flag Officer Sea Training – the men and women who prepare the Fleet for duties on the front line – and in particular its Mine Warfare and Patrol Vessels 'branch' (typically abbreviated in RN parlance to FOST MPV).

In the surface world, capital ships, destroyers and frigates are put through their paces off Plymouth, where the fictional nations of Brownia and Mustardia are always at each other's throats and the Royal Navy must save the day, despite often inclement weather.

And smaller ships – patrol vessels, survey ships, minehunters – earn their spurs in the Firth of Clyde and environs... where the fictional nations of Brownia and Mustardia are always at each other's throats and the

Royal Navy must save the day, despite often inclement weather...

It's down to a 42-strong team at FOST to ensure nearly 1,000 personnel spread across around 40 vessels are ready for what the world might throw at them.

It's the minehunters we're focusing on today – as it's their training which has evolved most significantly recently.

Traditionally, minehunters went through FOST every two years – irrespective of how well the ship's companies were performing, and irrespective of the ship's mission.

Not any more.

If you're in the minehunting community, you will go to the Gulf. Probably several times. Every six or seven months the crews of the four ships in Bahrain (two Hunts, two Sandowns) change, trading places with counterparts on (almost) identical vessels back in Blyth.

That continual rotation meant the old training method needed to change so crews now have three different assessments from the FOSTies: an assurance visit after a crew move back onboard a ship in the UK, fresh from their exertions in the Middle East; an initial training visit about six weeks before the main spell of assessment to smooth the way; and the main period of

operational sea training itself, with the emphasis on scenarios crews are likely to face in the Gulf – involving everything from the equipment used, communications systems and UN Security Council Resolutions.

Small ship OST is shorter – five weeks compared with eight or nine for larger vessels – but the fundamentals are the same: fire, flood, air attack, terrorists, riots, basically all the very worst things you wouldn't wish to happen... often simultaneously.

The five weeks are split into three phases:

- the first deals with the basics of operating a warship, plus fending off terrorists on jet-skis or keeping rioters and suicide bombers (played by Faslane-based trainee submariners) at bay on the jetty;
- next up, bespoke training – which for the minehunters means, er, hunting mines, putting Seafox submersibles and divers in the water as the crews go into defence watches for up to ten days, surveying and clearing a route – at times as they come under attack;
- the final phase sees the lessons of parts one and two combined.



SHIPS-BIG MISSION

All of which – minehunting aside – isn't that different from what the big boys go through.

Today we're in phase one. Air attack – courtesy of Falcon jets – and fast attack craft (actually a Serco boat used for moving personnel around the Clyde, although the FOSTies are in the process of acquiring a remote-controlled fast boat that ship's companies can fire live ammo at for increased realism).

This is Sub Lt John Robinson's favourite part of OST. Admittedly, the logistics officer is assessing rather than being assessed, so he's not being tested personally.

"Simulators are good but you can't beat the realism that a fast jet attacking the ship gives," he says. "The sights, sounds and smoke whilst the ship is rolling about creates very realistic training."

The smoke comes courtesy of portable machines, while the hot spot simulation apparatus (aka hot water bottle) mimics the seat of a fire – and the fire-fighting parties are expected to locate it using their thermal imaging cameras.

Minehunters are slow (especially in their hunt mode – slower than walking speed). But they are highly manoeuvrable. And they are small – a Hunt is not 200ft long and only 32ft wide, a Sandown is shorter but a couple of feet wider.

That aside, it's left to machine-guns, miniguns and the 30mm cannon to bring the incoming aircraft out of the sky.

Whilst fast jets and fast attack craft always catch the eye, it's the broader Gulf-specific training which is really beneficial to old and new hands alike.

"The training has been put together from lessons learnt in the past, but modern threats, such as from a suicide bomber is a new dynamic which has new lessons for those of us that are old hands at OST," says Bangor's PO Adrian Wilcocks.

Or as shipmate AB(MW) Christian Dobson describes it succinctly: "Five of the best weeks in 2013."

Such words are echoed – rather less tersely – by Lt Cdr Paul Ottewell, whose crew went through the revised training package and are now in the Gulf aboard HMS Ramsey.

"OST remains the operational crucible that it always was, but it now has a seam of theatre-specific training running through it – which is a powerful motivator for teams about to deploy to the Gulf."

"The Royal Navy's world-class training just got better."

Lt Cdr Toby Shaughnessy, in charge of Ramsey's sister HMS Bangor, agrees.

"It delivers the most up-to-date and operationally-relevant

training currently possible in the naval environment," he said.

"I can't conceive of a better foundation to prepare my crew for operations overseas."

For those from FOST imparting their expertise, "there's a good sense of achievement in seeing how far we can take the teams," says CPO Alan Innes, mine warfare trainer.

PO Angela McClelland, a communications and information systems expert, nods: "Watching the improvements of the crews is rewarding."

"Each crew is different and each day is different in this role, but if I can provide any assistance or guidance that the crews can take to theatre then that's great."

As for their boss, Cdr Carl Wiseman, not long ago he was on the receiving end of FOST MPV when in charge of HMS Clyde.

Now the boot is on the other foot as he's Commander Sea Training: "Having just joined, I'm still impressed – as I was when I was a commanding officer – by the flexibility and professionalism of the quality of the training offered by my team to the small ship community."

With thanks to Lt Kathryn Drinkall, FOST North



pictures: cpo(phot) tam mcdonald, frpu north



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Google takes stroll through submarine

UPTO now, if you wanted to stroll around a Royal Navy submarine you either had to join the Senior Service or visit a decommissioned boat such as HMS Ocelot at Chatham Historic Dockyard.

The O-boat may be more than 50 years old – and more than two decades out of commission –

but she is still at the forefront of digital technology.

Because the former Royal Navy Oberon-class submarine has become the first such vessel to be fully integrated into the Google Street View system, allowing internet users to poke around the living and working spaces of the Cold War warrior from the comfort of their own

homes.

Type 'HMS Ocelot' into Google Maps and the diesel-powered submarine can be seen in an aerial view of the Historic Dockyard in Chatham, where she is one of the top visitor attractions.

Zoom in and an orange dot appears on the boat, indicating that viewers can take a virtual

tour inside the pressure hull, including the captain's cabin, the galley, the weapons room, the control room and the engine room. You can also take an online stroll around the outside of the submarine and surrounding areas of the dockyard.

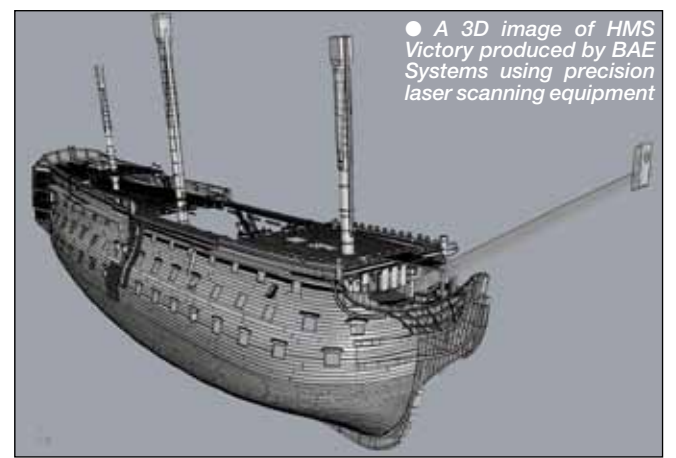
The facility, launched last month, was made possible by C Inside Media, a firm created a year ago by four award-winning Google Trusted Photographers who provide customers with 'Google Business photo shoots', bringing Street View inside commercial premises.

C Inside Media approached the dockyard to make Ocelot a showpiece of their skills, as the cramped interior, narrow hatches, irregular lighting and low deckheads made photography inside the boat extremely challenging.

According to the dockyard, "after much ducking, crouching and several thousand photographs, C Inside Media were delighted to present the Historic Dockyard Chatham with HMS Ocelot inside and out, in full 360 degrees on 'Google Maps' using 'Street View' technology."

Ocelot, the last warship built for the Royal Navy at Chatham, was launched in 1962 and saw service in the Cold War until she paid off in 1991. She returned to the yard in Kent – which closed as a military site in 1984 – as a visitor attraction in 1992.

<http://www.thedockyard.co.uk/submarinetour>



● A 3D image of HMS Victory produced by BAE Systems using precision laser scanning equipment

Model shows complex design of HMS Victory

ENGINEERS at BAE Systems have revealed just how advanced British naval shipbuilding was in the age of sail.

In a ground-breaking initiative using innovative 3D laser imaging techniques, experts in Portsmouth have been able to get under the skin of HMS Victory – the oldest commissioned warship in the world – allowing them to understand in more detail the huge achievements in the design and build techniques of the ship.

The first image of the hull demonstrates how tradesmen built the ship to advanced standards during the 18th Century.

Laser mapping of the ship, which is owned by the National Museum of the Royal Navy, has been used to construct a digital model which contains the details of every piece of timber and iron in its construction.

Each component – and there are a total of 80,000 – has its position, dimensions, material, record of replacement and condition embedded to provide a database for the long-term

conservation of the ship.

This 'intelligent model' represents a major advance in the approach to the management of historic structures.

As further restoration is carried out, using the model as a template, a record of the work will be added to the model.

The work is based on industry standard software which, with updates, will ensure the continuing development of the intelligent model as a preservation tool.

The model is being used by engineers to establish the priorities for repair and conservation – specialist structural analysis techniques are applied incorporating data from surveys and historic records.

BAE Systems have used modern warship know-how alongside skilled crafting methods throughout the project; techniques used have ranged from strength-testing the masts and rigging to using chemicals to treat the wood and eliminate insects which could threaten her structure.



Picture: LA(Phot) Joel Rouse

● (From left): Cdre Mike Bullock (ACOS Logistics, NCHQ); Capt Jerry Kyd (Captain BRNC); Iain McLeod (FCO Legal Adviser); Bruce Houlder (Director of Service Prosecutions); Dr Susan Atkins (Service Complaints Commissioner); Cdre Andrei Spence (Commodore Naval Legal Services); Lord Neuberger; Rear Admiral Jonathan Woodcock (Naval Secretary); Judge Richard Price (Recorder of Portsmouth); Judge Robert Fraser; and Air Vice Marshal Lindsay Irvine (Director Legal Services, RAF)

Legal eagles flock to Dartmouth

THE Naval Legal Service's annual conference and dinner was hosted by Britannia Royal Naval College last month.

Naval lawyers serving in logistics posts at sea or recently returned from operational deployment joined their HQ-based counterparts from across Defence to consider the future operating environment for maritime forces.

The conference examined international law relating to cyber-operations; the development of

the law relating to combat immunity following the widely-reported 'snatch Land Rover' cases heard in the Supreme Court; and changes to UK Rules of Engagement.

That evening, the Naval Legal cadre – under the direction of Cdre Andrei Spence – hosted a dinner with guests drawn from the judiciary, the Bar and key members of the Service Justice System.

Guest of Honour at the dinner was Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury, President of the Supreme Court.

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Intrepid honoured in Leros

SAILORS and soldiers who lost their lives in the battle for the Greek island of Leros have been remembered in ceremonies in Port Lakki.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the sinking of destroyers HM ships Panther, Eclipse, Hurworth, Rockwood, Dulverton and Intrepid, plus Greek destroyers Queen Olga and Adrias.

They were lost between September 26 and November 14 1943 during the Battle for Leros in the Aegean Sea, a crucial element in the Dodecanese campaign, which saw British troops under heavy attack less than two weeks after landing.

They were forced to capitulate within two months, suffering heavy casualties with many more taken prisoner.

Former Able Seaman Albert Poulter was a member of Intrepid's ship's company, and led a campaign to erect a monument in Leros for his old ship.

S/M Albert returns to the island year after year to mark the loss of Intrepid, the Queen Olga (which also has a dedicated monument) and the other ships which have no specific memorials.

This year the ceremonies began at the Alinda British War Cemetery, where apart from the five graves of shipmates are 180 British soldiers' graves, some of whom would have been landed by Intrepid at Port Lakki.

The following morning the spotlight moved on to the HMS Intrepid monument, where wreaths were placed.

A Jeep and two men dressed as World War 2 soldiers then drew up at the site, offering S/M Albert a lift 400m along the promenade to the A/T Olga monument (pictured above), where a service of remembrance was held in association with the Hellenic Navy, led by senior Greek Orthodox Church clerics.

S/M Albert was one of the official party laying wreaths, following in the footsteps of high-ranking Hellenic Navy and government officials.

The programme ended with Albert and others in the HMS Intrepid party being invited to join a Greek warship as it sailed out to the spot where the Queen Olga was sunk by German bombers in the same raids which fatally damaged the Intrepid on September 26 1943; wreaths were laid on the water in memory of the 60 or so victims of the Olga as well as the 15 who died in Intrepid.

The British destroyer was crippled by a German bomb and moved to a more sheltered anchorage, where her crew were taken off, but a subsequent attack on September 27 blew her stern off and she capsized.

Goofers scatter as rogue plane circles

THE photograph printed in the November edition of *Navy News* showing two Buccaneers passing over HMS Eagle in 1964 brought memories flooding back, said reader Jim Dowsett.

I served on Eagle, as Ordnance Artificer 1st Class, from February 1963 to May 1966 when after a short spell in Guzz FMG I was drafted to Dolphin for submarine training and then on to the Polaris Project.

In September 1965, with Capt Roxburgh in command, we were ordered to make 'best speed' through the Med, Suez Canal and the Red Sea to Aden, arriving on October 1, in support of British forces trying to control the potential breakup of the colony.

The following day, during flying exercises, a Buccaneer of

800 Naval Air Squadron, crewed by Lt Cdr Chase USN and Lt Markley USN, developed fuel problems whilst carrying out mock attacks on the ship.

The aircraft lost power and because of the amount of fuel it was carrying it was deemed unsafe to attempt a landing either back on board or ashore.

The pilot was instructed to put the aircraft into neutral flight and eject at 2,000ft as close to the ship as possible.

The Tannoy burst into life advising the ship's company of the situation and stating that anyone 'off watch' who wanted to watch the ejection and search and rescue recovery to muster on the flight deck – there must have been at least several hundred mustered on the flight deck to witness this once-in-a-lifetime event.

The operation was carried out

with superb efficiency and the SAR crew had the pilots back on board before the plane crashed close to the ship.

However the drama was not yet over. The Buccaneer remained in flight for a further five minutes making two more passes over the ship, getting lower and lower each time.

The tannoy again burst into life: 'Clear the flight deck, clear the flight deck at the rush'.

This produced what I can only describe as a real-life Giles cartoon, with several hundred onlookers [goofers in WAFU parlance] trying to escape through just six access points.

Fast forward to July 1969, when I was now the Chief OA of HMS Revenge, responsible for the maintenance and operation of the missile launcher centre.

Our Attack team had flown out to Cape Canaveral to witness HMS Renown's demonstration and shakedown operation and live missile firing down the test range.

We arrived just after the successful moon landing and were still there when the Apollo crew were safely recovered.

My hosts invited me to a celebration party with the chance to meet astronauts in training.

In talking to one of them he asked what I had done before joining Polaris.

When I told him that I had

spent three years on a carrier he told me that he had flown off a British carrier.

I said that I hoped he was better than the two clowns we had on the Eagle and told him the story – to which he replied with the immortal words 'I was that pilot...'.

For the rest of the evening he invited me to recall that memory to friends of his.

Needless to say, in true Jack fashion, the story was embellished with each telling and I think in the final version there were 2,000 on the flight deck, only three access points and the aircraft missed the superstructure by just 30ft.

A year later we took Revenge over to Cape Canaveral (not yet Cape Kennedy) for our own DASO and missile live firing.

We were visited by the now Admiral Roxburgh, Flag Officer Submarines, who invited anyone who had previously served with him to drinks.

I said that the last time I had a drink with him was on the Eagle after I had captained the ship's football team that won the China Shield in Singapore, beating the Royal Marines 7-4 in the final.

I then told him my Buccaneer story, at the end of which he said 'Thank you, Chief – that will be a fine addition to my fund of cocktail party stories.'



● Naval personnel parade at the Trafalgar Cemetery

Gibraltar remembers Trafalgar

THE traditional act of remembrance has been held in the Trafalgar Cemetery in Gibraltar to mark the 208th anniversary of the seminal battle.

Wreaths were placed on the graves of those who died at Trafalgar by Cdr Steve Thomas.

During the service, Governor Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns read Collingwood's despatch, which announced that "the Noble Commander-in-Chief" had "died in the arms of Victory."

This was followed by the preamble, read by Chief Minister Fabian Picardo, which noted that "the Fleets of the Royal Navy have gathered at Gibraltar for over two centuries before sailing to face the dangers of the seas and the violence of the enemy."

Commander British Forces Cdre John Clink then read the prayer written by Nelson on the morning of the battle.



● Lt John Dean RNVR standing by the radar on which he first worked

Echoes of former career

A 93-YEAR-OLD veteran who signed up as a reservist in 1941 has visited the museum at HMS Collingwood to see the equipment on which he became a specialist.

Seventy years after his first visit, former Lt John Dean RNVR, Group Radar Officer (Electrical Branch), met Bill Legg, curator of the Radar and Communication Museum.

Accompanied by his daughter Margaret, John shared stories about times past, Bill was able to show John the Type 271 radar – the first 10cm radar set – a piece of equipment that John had worked with during World War 2.

Remembering the equipment, John said: "It was like putting your head in a microwave..."

The Type 271 radar was first installed on ships in 1941 and became the most sophisticated piece of kit onboard during the war, with the capabilities to detect surface ships 25 miles away and submarine periscopes on the surface from a mile away.

John said: "I joined the RNVR whilst studying at Birmingham University."

"I remember walking the five miles to campus from my accommodation when two bombs dropped nearby sending

shrapnel everywhere.

"I thought to myself, 'I can't do that again!'"

"The Admiralty offered students the chance to undertake a two-year course with Officer Entry, so I took it even though my Dad was completely against it."

John went on to study Radio Training and Engineering and Wireless Telegraphy and trained under Sir Mark Oliphant, responsible for airborne radar.

During his naval career, John served in HMS Highlander with the Escort Group B4, though his highly sought-after skills and knowledge of radars made him indispensable and often working shore side.

John was called to the carrier HMS Fencer after her radar aerial was knocked off by returning aircraft in rough seas, and his ground-breaking idea of using the radar's IFF (Identification, Friend or Foe) transponder so planes could get a bearing on the ship at 120 miles and return safely earned him a Mentioned in Dispatches.

"I loved being on ships at sea – I remember being in the middle of the North Atlantic and being tossed into a rowing boat to work on another ship's radar – the conditions were terrible, but I loved it," he said.

AN HISTORIC vessel which saw service off the beaches of Normandy now serves as a sailing club headquarters – and a memorial to the men who operated the support barges during the Normandy campaign.

Landing Barge Kitchens – LBKs – were part of the fleet of support craft that made the journey across the Channel in June 1944, hundreds of them Thames 'dumb' (unpowered) barges converted for a variety of uses and given marine engines to power them at around six knots.

Some carried vehicles, some provided engineering support, water, oil, even flak or gunfire, but amongst the most popular were the LBKs.

Equipped and supplied with enough stores to feed 900 men for a week, these vessels – just under 80ft long with a capacity of 150 tons – had a crew of around 25 (13 of them cooks) and were generally commanded by a sub lieutenant or midshipman.

They provided hot meals and drinks for the landing craft and other small ships used to ferry supplies ashore, and were subject to the same threat of attack as any other craft supporting the invasion of France.

The smell of baking wafting across the water – an LBK could produce 1,000 loaves a day – provided some comfort in the midst of conflict, and the fare was not to be sniffed at; one menu



● LBK 6 in her new guise as club house for the Harwich and Dovercourt Sailing Club

included roast pork, cabbage and baked potatoes, followed by fruit and custard, for 600 men.

LBK 6 was part of the 35th LB (Supply and Repair) Flotilla which sailed from Langstone Harbour to Sword Beach in 1944.

In July of that year she was moved to Gold Beach, and on the 24th she welcomed a distinguished visitor on board – Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, the man who planned and led Operation Neptune, the naval element of the Normandy landings.

Through the remainder of the 1940s and the following decade LBK 6 was used as a floating galley for ships in refit at Chatham, moving on to Portsmouth in 1963 where she fulfilled the same role.

She was slated for disposal more than once but further

use was always found for her – including supporting the refit of HMS Intrepid in 1977-78.

Her military life over, she was taken up by the Harwich and Dovercourt Sailing Club, who had her transferred in 2008 to Gas House Creek in Harwich, where she now serves as the club house.

This summer she emerged from 'refit' – externally she looks much as she would have done at Normandy, but the inside has been transformed into an attractive, comfortable space.

On June 6 this year the sailing club hosted a remembrance service attended by Service veterans organisations.

A visiting veteran later performed the official opening of the new function room – the Normandy Room – which reflects LBK 6's wartime history.



NAVY NEWS

SHIP of the MONTH

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NOVEMBER 2013 FUNDRAISERS OF THE MONTH



The Great South Run Team

Triple triumph for Alex

A TEAM of thirty runners - from HMS Nelson, HMS Mersey, HMS Collingwood, HMS Sultan and HMS Excellent - took to the streets of Portsmouth to complete the 10-mile course in gusty conditions.

For Alex Cave, (pictured left) a former RN Photographer and now a Babcock employee, this was a triple triumph as she also competed in the Great North and Great Eastern Runs.

Commodore Mike Mansergh (pictured right), who retired from the Royal Navy in November, raised over £700 and successfully completed the race in 1hr18m. He said: "I was delighted to be running for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. Despite the blustery weather I managed to make it across the finish line in one piece."

Over £3,000 was raised by the team.

Sultaners go bananas

SAILORS and civilian staff from HMS Sultan took part in a Trafalgar Day 5km run to raise funds for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Over 260 entrants took part in a variety of comedy outfits dressed as animals and celebrities.

Several local supermarkets supported the fundraiser, with Gosport's ASDA providing a banana for every entrant.

Organiser LPT Phil Mant said: "I wanted to make this memorable and for everyone to support. The RNRMC do a lot for the Service community and families and it's important for us to give something back."



● Several competitors ran the 5km course carrying bananas.

Picture: LAPHot Guy Pool

WHILE YOU LIFT SPIRITS YOU CAN RAISE MONEY!

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity makes grants to boost morale, motivation and physical and mental well-being to the serving and veteran communities and families.

With a schedule of celebrations and socials – Trafalgar Night, the Corps Birthday, fireworks night, pantos and Christmas balls to name a few – you could help raise funds at these events which will help us maintain our crucial support now and for years to come.

To join our 'celebrations and socials' campaign, contact 023 9254 8289 or fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk

ROYAL NAVY & ROYAL MARINES CHARITY



The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (no. 6047294) and is a registered charity (no.1117794) and Scotland (SC041898)



Picture: LAPHot Alex Knott

ONBOARD a busy warship in the searing heat of the Gulf, what's the best thing to do during a lull in the operational tempo?

If you are a Captain RM in charge of seven Royal Marines, the answer, obviously, is to ask your team to run a marathon each in just 24 hours...

Capt Chris Nightingale's bright idea combined two elements close to Royal's heart: 'phys in the bag' and raising money for a good cause.

As it turned out, Sgt Matt Hallam, L/Cpl Steve Farrell, Mne Ross Inglis, Mne Liam Doherty, Mne 'Pabz' Gannon and Mne Tom 'Shadz' Porter – all members of HMS Montrose's Royal Marines Boarding Team (RMBT) – were all up for the challenge.

The 24-hour run started at the stroke of midnight, with OCRM leading the magnificent seven from the front by running the

first relay leg around Montrose's upper deck.

After 18 hours, the end was in sight, the sun at last started to set and temperatures dropped to more manageable levels. At this stage, struggling with some fairly severe blisters, Sgt Matt Hallam decided it would be an opportune moment to re-introduce the 'Commando shuffle' to get the job done, and the relay remained unbroken.

The ship's company assembled in the dark to cheer on the team as the marines galloped towards the finish.

The team completed 1,609 laps in total – that's approximately 216 miles, meaning each man ran around 31 miles.

Over £900 was raised for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. Donations are still being taken at: www.justgiving.com/rossinglist23

EVENTS

DEC 3-8

Pantomime Season

Feel the magic and delay growing up at this year's pantomimes. *Mother Goose* flies in to Fisher Hall, HMS Excellent from Dec 3-5 at 1930 with matinees on Dec 7-8 at 1430.

HMS Collingwood's *Peter Pan* is on Dec 4-8 at 1930 (with matinees at 1400 on Sat and Sun). Dec 8 is a matinee only).

DEC 7-8

British Military Tournament

London's Earls Court will feature the White Helmets Motorcycle Display Team, The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery, the legendary Command Field Gun competition and a special tribute to current and former Service personnel who have overcome disabilities.

tinyurl.com/BMT-RNRMC

DEC 18

Esprit De Corps Concert Series

Held at the Winston Churchill Theatre in Ruislip, the Esprit De Corps concert series features the finest military bands of the British Armed Forces. The final concert of the series features the Central Band of the Royal Air Force (December 18)

www.compasstheatre.co.uk

DEC 20

Mistletoe Ball

Celebrate your party in style at the Moorland Garden Hotel's Mistletoe Ball, in aid of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. 7pm (Yelverton, Devon). Tel: 01822 852245



● CPOs Keith Miller and Paul Donnelly clock up the miles

Runathon rescuers

GENEROUS shoppers helped out in more ways than one during 771(SAR) Squadron's 60-hour Runathon, when one keen shopper stepped on board the team's running machine for ten minutes to help the airmen raise an impressive £3,451.

Eighteen runners covered 443.61 miles (713.89km), with several clocking up some remarkable distances and times, capturing the shoppers' attention in ASDA's supermarket foyer in Penryn, Cornwall.

POACMN Russ 'Patch' Adams organised the event to boost funds towards a target figure of £60,000 for charity during the SAR squadron's 60th anniversary year.

Leading the record board was Paul Smith, who recorded

102 km over eight hours on the treadmill.

Others posting outstanding distances and times were Lt Al Lockett with 85km over six hours, LH Dan Newton's 68km over five hours, Lt Cdr Adam Jones 57km in 5hrs 47m and lastly 'Robin the shopper' who ran 1.8km in ten minutes.

Able supported by bucket collectors Phil Ross, David Morey, Paul Blanthorne, Paul Smalley and Kathryn Cartledge, the team thanked ASDA's staff, especially Bernadette, who helped to set up the event.

Reaping the benefits of the 'SAR 60' charity fundraising will be the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity; Children's Hospice South West and CLIC Sargent.



● Setting off from York - the hometown sailors and support team

Picture: Tracy Robinson

Homeward bound

THINKING of home while deployed to the Gulf in HMS Kent inspired ET(ME) Matt 'Dugie' Dugard to come up with a fundraising idea to ride between the home towns of colleague CPO Kev Robinson (York) and Dugie (Portsmouth) in just four days.

Their aim was to raise money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and the Royal Masonic Trust for Boys and Girls.

The two keen cyclists prepared for their ride by getting out on their bikes during each of the ship's port visits but during the long days at sea they used CPO Robinson's turbo trainer cycling machine along with the ship's spin bikes. Unfortunately the use of the bike trainers at sea could never prepare them for hill climbs and wet and windy weather they encountered.

With LMA Maree O'Rourke as the team medic/mechanic and Dugie's father Jez as their support driver, the intrepid pair averaged 75 miles a day with only minor emergencies (broken spokes and burst inner tubes) as they battled through the 300 miles.

Met at HMS Victory by supportive family and friends, the pair raised just over £1,200 which will be split between the two charities.

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Picture: LA(Phot) Sahra Richards

Rare bone disease keeps Adam riding

NEWLY-QUALIFIED Naval Airman Adam Beasley cycled for 12 hours non-stop to raise awareness and funds for a children's charity that has a special meaning for him.

Adam was diagnosed as a child with Perthes Disease, a rare bone condition that affects one in 1,000 children between the ages of four and eight.

He spent four years wheelchair-bound with both his legs in a plaster cast.

The recovery takes years with special treatment, but Adam is now fighting fit and felt he was the right man for the challenge.

Sufferers from Perthes need help to get around by using specially-designed machines or hand-propelled bikes that cost

more than £400 each.

Adam (pictured above, second left) wants to raise as much money as possible to buy new bikes for fellow sufferers.

Delighted with the generosity of his colleagues at RNAS Culdrose, he said: "It's been a huge success. I completed 162 miles in 12 hours and we raised £625 – roughly £100 on the day alone."

"Massive thanks to NA Melchion Quammie who kept me sane throughout, visiting every two hours to make sure I had enough food and water."

Adam was also hugely grateful to the UPO staff and Medical Centre for their support.

To donate to Adam's cause, visit the website www.justgiving.com/adam-beasley



Setting sights on new heights

TAKE two middle-aged men, invite them to a charity evening, provide them with a good meal, add a little wine and what happens?

One suggests: "Let's go to Everest Base Camp!" The other agrees: "That's always been on my bucket list – and while we're at it let's raise some money for the Children's Fund."

And that's how many adventures begin. In this case, five individuals finding themselves in Nepal immediately after the monsoon season had ended.

Nick Dutt, whose son James is currently the Navigation Officer onboard HMS Quorn, and Dave Bridger, the Engineer Officer's Branch Secretary and long-time trustee of the RNRMC Children's Fund, managed to persuade three friends to join them for a 'little walk' in the Himalayas.

With a combined age of 285 years and with the three friends having no long-distance and only limited mountain walking experience, the intrepid explorers arrived at Lukla Airport.



● A little light(headed) reading for Cdr Dave Bridger at Everest's Base Camp. Where do you read your *NAVY NEWS*?

After eight days of walking, two of which were rest and acclimatisation days, this unlikely team arrived at Everest Base Camp.

In doing so, they have raised just over £5,000 for the only

Service charity that is specifically dedicated to assisting Service children in need, hardship or distress.

Last year the RN and RM Children's Fund helped over 1,900 naval children, spending just under £1.4m in the process.

Grants are given for a variety of reasons. In some cases children with specific needs required specialist help or equipment; in others families (serving or ex-Service) required assistance with child or respite care.

Sadly, the cases seen by the RN and RM Children's Fund continue to grow and funds are always required. In many cases a little help is all that is required, but the overall effect on the family is considerable.

To donate to the Everest Base Camp Trek visit: www.justgiving.com/DaveB-EBC or text RNRM58 followed by the amount (ie RNRM58 10 for a £10 donation) to 70070.

Further information about the charity, frequently abbreviated to RNRMCF can be found at www.rnrmchildrensfund.org.uk



Déjà Vu

SAILORS from HMS Collingwood provided support to the Fareham Citizens Advice Bureau in an office move – just as they did 28 years ago.

This time the helping hands were different, but the same cheerful and enthusiastic support was given.

The seven trainees helped the Bureau move desks and office equipment down a floor in the Fareham Library.

It was a case of *déjà vu* for the CAB, because back in 1985 they had also requested assistance from the Senior Service when they moved down the road from another office.

Chairman of Fareham Citizens Advice Bureau Jim Bullock said: "We are extremely grateful to the stalwarts of HMS Collingwood for doing the 'heavy work' once again."

"We thank them all most sincerely."



Star turn for Ellie

ROYAL Marines musician Ellie Lomas has seen her public profile soar after appearing on national TV and radio singing to an audience of millions.

Ellie was featured singing new single *Feels Like Home* on the Radio 2 Chris Evans show and at the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall.

Ellie was also seen playing euphonium with the RM Band at the Remembrance Sunday parade at the Cenotaph in London.

Released on iTunes under her stage name Ellie Red, the new single will raise funds for the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund and a Berkshire children's hospice.

Ellie said: "I feel extremely honoured to be singing on national radio and television – it is a tremendous privilege."

She added: "*Feels Like Home* really fits in well with the military theme as there are lots of people away from home in places like Afghanistan and Iraq. Hopefully I'll make an album and if that goes well, we'll have to see."

Ellie joined the Royal Marines Band Service ten years ago and was recently spotted singing at a charity dinner by broadcaster Sir Michael Parkinson.

He was so impressed that he gave her a helping hand by paying for her to record five tracks.

She said: "The Royal Marines Band have been very supportive, and I want to stay in the Band Service for the foreseeable future."

"I love it and they are 100 per cent supportive. I always wanted a career in music and that's what I am doing with the Royal Marines."

Flippin' tyres...

FIFTY Royal Navy sailors in Portsmouth went flipping crazy in a tiring challenge for the BBC charity Children in Need – and hope to have written their names into the record books as well.

They took it in turns to flip a huge tractor tyre, weighing 65kg, attempting a total of 10,000 flips in eight hours.

LPT Andrea Marshall, who organised the event at Portsmouth Naval Base, said: "It was exhausting but a great



Picture: LA(Phot) Ian Simpson

● *Wtr Sophie Corp gets to grips with the tyre flipping challenge* success too.

"We use tyre flips as part of circuit training, so it seemed a relevant challenge and also a fun way to raise money for a good cause."

"We hope to have our efforts registered as an official world record as no tyre-flip record currently exists."



Stepping out

TRAINEE sailors from HMS Raleigh have put their team working skills into practice painting the communal areas of the Abbeyfield Centre, a charity-run centre in Torpoint dedicated to the care of senior citizens.

Trainee submariner Marcus Angiolini said: "We've been chatting to some of the residents while we've been here."

"Those who are ex-military have been really interested in today's Navy and what we've been doing during our training."

Training Officer WO1 Phil Varley said: "The sailors were between professional courses and we regularly use activities like this to practise a number of the skills taught during their initial naval training, such as communication, leadership and team working."

"It also gives them the chance to experience working with the general public, a task they may be involved in later in their careers should they be called upon to provide support in a civil emergency, either in the UK or abroad."

PERFORMING at the Festival of Remembrance, before the Royal Family, heads of government and a TV audience of millions, five daughters of Forces families delighted the nation with their rendition of *The Call*, a poignant single released to boost funds for the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal.

The Poppy Girls (pictured right) – Megan, Florence, Alice, Bethany and Charlotte – all have fathers currently serving, with Alice, Florence and Megan being the daughters of three RN officers.

The Queen appeared particularly pleased as she witnessed the surprise reunion of ten-year-old Megan Adams, who was not expecting to see her father, Lt Cdr Billy Adams, for another three months due to his counter-piracy duties in the Indian Ocean.

After the girls finished singing, host of the Festival performance Huw Edwards revealed the well-kept secret of a special surprise for one of the girls.

As her father came down the steps towards his daughter,

Megan cried out in surprise: "Daddy.!" and raced towards him for an emotional reunion.

The audience applauded at length as the pair hugged.

The Poppy Girls' single has since raced into the Top Ten, and the emotional reunion went viral on YouTube.

The girls were chosen after a nationwide search for talent among Forces children – the proviso being they had either a parent or sibling serving in the UK or overseas.

Florence (nicknamed Florrie) knows all about life in the military – and has already had a taste of the pop world.

Last year it was mum, Katherine, in the spotlight as a member of the chart-topping Military Wives choir.

Florrie said: "I was so proud of my mum when she did that and I wanted to do it too."

"Having to sing for the judges was a bit like *The X Factor*. I was very nervous. But I am used to it now."

"We take deep breaths and remember why we are doing this and now we have all become best



friends."

The girls have had an exciting time promoting the record, juggling school and college commitments to appear as guests on national TV and radio shows.

Highlights have included meeting the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prime Minister.

Dickon Stainer, President of Decca Records, praised the girls' "hard work, discipline and dedication". Decca, he said, was proud to support the project.

"When you hear these young

kids talk about their families and the sacrifices they make growing up in a Forces family, you do wonder how such young shoulders can carry the burden of the constant stress and anxiety."

He sees a bright future for The Poppy Girls. "Quite simply this record is beautiful," said Mr Stainer.

The Poppy Girls single is available on iTunes; 40p from each sale goes to the Poppy Appeal. See www.thepoppygirls.com



Out of despair, ma

COLOURS on Friday November 8.

Five and a half months into her round-the-world deployment, HMS Daring struck out into the Strait of Johor, ready to take her place alongside the navies of Singapore, Malaysia, New Zealand and Australia.

In a global tour, it was the latest in a myriad of link-ups with foreign navies. Staff meetings. Discussions. A spot of flying the flag. Plenty of defence engagement. Definitely some air defence exercises (after all, it's what Daring was built for).

Other than the location – the South China Sea – and the chance to work with four allies for the first time, Exercise Bersama Lima offered little different from other exercises, except the chance to pause to honour the dead of the Prince of Wales and Repulse over the wrecks of the great castles of steel.

The weather forecast for the coming few days did not look promising. A typhoon was barrelling westwards across the Pacific. There was a distinct possibility it might upset Bersama Lima...

At about the same time as Daring was leaving Singapore, the 7,500 souls living on the small island of Guintacan, 1,500 miles to the northeast, were searching for whatever shelter they could find – preferably concrete.

Typhoon Haiyan – Chinese for 'petrel' – had already cut a swath through the Leyte Gulf and caused untold devastation in the city of Tacloban, 80 miles east of Guintacan.

Now, with wind speeds of 145mph, Haiyan spun and swirled across the Visayas. Around 9.40am it smashed Daanbantayan on the northern tip of Cebu island.

And then, about 20 minutes later, it struck the small island of Guintacan – at four miles long and one and a half miles wide, about the size of Portland, although with considerably fewer inhabitants.

The winds of Haiyan uprooted trees. They ripped the corrugated panelling from the roofs. Telegraph poles were snapped like matchsticks. Power lines were toppled. Boats were dashed against the coral reef, driven inland by the storm surge, or simply carried away.

By the time Typhoon Haiyan – known as Yolanda in the Philippines – had made its final landfall in the archipelago, some 280 miles to the west on the island of Palawan some ten hours later, at least 4,000 people were dead. Four times that number were injured. Over 1,600 were missing. One third of a million homes had been destroyed, a similar number damaged. Ten million people had been affected.

When the people of Guintacan emerged from their shelters, the world they knew was changed. Three of their number were dead. The scale of the devastation was beyond comprehension – and beyond their limited means.

On the basketball court of the island's community school, its baskets tossed over the side of the fencing by the storm, villagers got busy with brushes and painted an SOS in white:

HELP PLS.
HAGDAN, STA.FE [Santa Fe]

And then they waited for help to come.

It was eight days before the mayday on Guintacan was spotted. By a Lynx Mk8. On one of half a dozen reconnaissance sorties over the Visayan Sea.

Having paid her respects to the men of Force Z, HMS Daring received fresh instructions. From the Prime Minister.

Make best speed for the Philippines. Exercise Bersama Lima could continue without D32's input.

On the four-day passage east, the 200 sailors and Royal Marines musicians aboard Daring – the latter embarked for flag-flying duties on the destroyer's world tour, but now required in their secondary role as first aiders – took stock of emergency food and medical supplies and began planning the ship's response. And they also steeled themselves. They would probably see traumatic sights normally only seen in wartime. "We are," Daring's Commanding Officer Cdr Angus Essenhigh told his men and women, "going into something that is an unknown quantity."

The initial response to Haiyan in the Philippines was focused on Tacloban City – relatively accessible, its devastation eyecatching to the international media.

But there was a world of devastation beyond Tacloban, on dozens of islands, spread across the Visayan and Sulu Seas – thousands of square miles of water – largely inaccessible... but not beyond the reach of ships and helicopters.

It was on these isolated communities that Daring would focus her efforts.

Once within range of the Philippines, the destroyer's Lynx was launched on six protracted sorties.

Flying some 1,400 miles – and searching an area of more than 42,000 square miles, spread across 48 islands – the Lynx and an expert from the Department for International Development (DfID) identified several islands in need of help.

Bantayan, Binuluangan, Concepcion and the Gigante Islands, plus Pan de Azucar Estancia on Panay, had all been devastated by the storm, with little left in the way of housing, infrastructure, fresh water and food.

Aerial imagery taken from the Lynx showed flattened housing, scattered possessions, large vessels blown on to shore – and large help signs spelled out, sometimes in palm leaves on the beach, sometimes in paint such as on Guintacan.

With the areas identified, Daring made for Cebu port – the city, spared the full brunt of Haiyan, became the hub of the relief effort – where medics from Save the Children embarked and aid collected by DfID was loaded aboard:

500 food baskets, each of which can feed a family of four for a week;
500 family shelter kits;
500 hygiene kits;
1,500 four-litre water carriers;
400 five-litre water carriers.

At first light on Monday November 18, by helicopter and by sea boat, with crowds of people sheltering themselves from the tropical sun with parasols and umbrellas, some of that aid was delivered to the people of Guintacan.

Having seen the destruction only in photographs or from afar, the reality of the aftermath of the storm when the sailors got ashore was striking.

"Many of the smaller fishing villages were devastated as – apart from a few concrete structures that were still standing – their houses were made from bamboo and rush, so that was completely flattened," said officer of the watch Lt Rebecca Brown.

"Their fishing boats were also destroyed which, in turn, affects their livelihoods. One woman – an 85-year-old – told me it was the worst storm she had seen hit the island and that she and her son had been

completely terrified."

Three people lost their lives and many suffered wounds after being hit by flying objects, with little medical care available on the island as there was just one nurse with dwindling supplies.

Guintacan's sole nurse, Angeleigh Espinosa, and sole clinic were overwhelmed by Haiyan – they normally deal with coughs, colds, minor ailments, not the "big wounds" which Angeleigh suddenly had to treat.

"Most of them had been hit by nails that flew out of the buildings and gave them puncture wounds," said Angeleigh.

"We are very glad to see the medical teams and the ship because we were running out of bandages and bandage tape and a few other medical supplies and I wasn't sure if I could get any more very quickly."

Seventy-four year-old Adoragon Pariol walked several kilometres over tree-strewn ground to reach the clinic after breaking her right wrist a week previously – she'd slipped on the wet floor of her inundated home. Save The Children doctors helped realign the wrist and applied splints and bandages, provided by HMS Daring, to help it set.

"You always arrive and think that you might not be able to make much of an impact," said the charity's Antonio Ulises Perez, "but today we helped a great many people and covered a number of life-saving needs. The sailors have been amazing – they are so committed and motivated and their logistics is extremely impressive."

Meanwhile a team from Daring set to work repairing the roof of 881-pupil Hagdan Elementary School, which had been completely stripped of its corrugated iron sheets, and cleared the inside of debris and stagnant water. The children have not been able to go to school for more than a week.

"It means their parents can start clearing up without having to worry about their children," said head Marivic G Gilbuena.

"Having the roof back on and the inside all cleaned up is great – we did not know where to start and it would have taken us much longer to be able to do it.

"When the storm hit we were all very frightened – it was so loud and scary. Everyone finds somewhere concrete to shelter and waits for it to pass."

As well as repairing the buildings, the sailors cleared fallen trees and electrical teams arrived to assess the extent of damage to one of the two generators for the village's power supply.

"One generator is fully serviceable," explained deputy marine engineer officer Lt Wendy Frame.

"The other has some minor defects as the wind moved it away from its stand, but they have enough fuel to run them both so they are not short of that.

"The issue is that the power lines are down and we have spoken to the DfID representatives on board, who will report the issue to the authorities to get it fixed for them."

More than 130 shelter packs – each of which contains four shelters, capable of shielding families of up to ten people apiece – were delivered. The village's water well was checked, and although there was some initial concern about possible contamination, there had been very few incidents of sickness; all villagers used tablets to purify drinking water.

With immediate assistance given to the



ay we bring hope

people of Guintacan, Daring sailed west to the small islands off the larger land mass of Panay.

Daring's efforts were at the business end of a long chain extending all the way back to the UK, via Cebu. As the destroyer arrived in the Philippines, an RAF C17 filled with heavy plant touched down in the islands, as a 20-strong team from the Permanent Joint Headquarters choreographed the UK's military response on the ground.

"All this effort has to be co-ordinated – it's a massive international effort, spread across a huge area," explained Cdre Clive Walker, the RN logistician in charge of the PJHQ team.

"My staff have been outstanding. All three Services have come together and shown utter dedication. It's all hands to the pump and they're living off barely 90 minutes' sleep."

The vehicles delivered by the RAF were immediately dispatched to the Tacloban area to clear the roads so aid could move in *en masse*.

"It's a simple mantra: more roads means more aid which means less suffering," said Cdre Walker.

As for Daring, she has done "a brilliant job" says the commodore – from her Lynx first scouting those devastated, remote communities, to her sailors delivering aid on the ground.

"This is an archipelago of thousands of islands. Some of them are literally crying out for help – as they spelled out in the sand or in playgrounds, and as the helicopter saw flying over."

"So we've been very lucky to be joined by Daring – and her Lynx especially."

The distressing sights on Guintacan were repeated 24 hours later on the islands of Canas, Calagnaan and Tulunanaun, to the north east of the island of Panay – and so was the delivery of hope.

Nearly 1,000 litres of fresh drinking water and 125 shelter packs were ferried – and at Calagnaan carried – ashore.

Every one of the three islands had lost homes, power, water, leaving families out in the open and vulnerable to the elements and high midday temperatures. One of the most remote communities had been without food or fresh water since Haiyan struck.

Although no one was killed on Canas, many islanders suffered lacerations from flying debris – wounds which were becoming infected after ten days; the Daring and Save the Children medical team treated more than 100 people.

"The team out there had been asked to treat a small child who had an infection to a wound in her face," said Daring's executive officer Lt Cdr Steven Wall.

"So as soon as the call came in we despatched two bottles of children's antibiotics across to treat her."

On Calagnaan, the sailors found one small community almost impossible to reach, unsupported by neighbouring districts, which had no access to any food. The storm had ruined their crops and smashed their fishing boats so they had not been able to source their own food.

"These people survived the typhoon by hiding in a cave further up the hill," said Daring's air warfare officer Lt Cdr Teilo Elliot-Smith.

"When we landed – which was



particularly hazardous as there was an extensive area of coral so we had to wade ashore – a woman came running up to me crying and pulling on my sleeves.

"She was saying they hadn't eaten for two days and they had run out of all their supplies."

The sailors brought the village of around 75 people the aid they needed and have gathered a report for DfID to send back to local government.

The last island to be visited was Tulunanaun, which had run out of fresh drinking water.

After an initial drop of 500 litres, the sailors returned with additional supplies.

"There are people here that are clearly suffering – their wells have been contaminated by sea water and they have no shelter," said Lt Cdr Wall.

"There were no fatalities recorded from any of the islands but people have been living in arduous conditions."

"People on Tulunanaun island for example have been living underneath piles of rubbish to try to escape the elements, so they were particularly in need of shelter."

"Most areas do have food supplies and communities are passing aid around the islands to each other which is good, but we have found some evidence of areas that are just not being reached so there is more to do here."

Which is exactly why three days after David Cameron sent Daring east, he decided to bolster the Royal Navy's input to Operation Patwin – the military codename for the relief mission – by dispatching HMS Illustrious... which had been in the middle of hunting down pirates off the Somali coast.

The carrier hot-footed it across 4,500 miles of Indian Ocean to get to Singapore, where one of the biggest loads of food, material and equipment since the Falklands conflict was waiting for her – except this time it was aid.

During the six-day passage from the Horn of Africa to the tip of the Malay Peninsula, the 35-year-old carrier was punching through the waves at speeds of up

to 27 knots at times, continuously overtaking merchantmen.

"If they had speed cameras at sea, I think we would be in for a fair few speeding fines," said bridge watchkeeper Lt Sarah Thomas RNZN

"Fortunately, once we're out of harbour there is no speed limit at sea as long as we remain safe."

"This has been the fastest long distance high seas passage I have ever experienced. Everyone's mind is focused on getting to the Philippines as soon as possible to render support to the people in need."

During the passage the ship conducted a RAS to top up fuel supplies.

"We have been maintaining full power and at that kind of speed we burn a lot more fuel than usual," said fuel engineer CPO Tom Carr.

Our four main engines are the same as the ones used in Concorde. At full power they are really quite thirsty.

"We refuelled approximately 1,300 cubic metres – 1.3 million litres – to top up our tanks. That would fill up 21,500 normal family cars. "We took on fuel at a rate that would fill up four normal family saloons every second."

Lusty was due to arrive around November 25 – a good two weeks after Haiyan struck. But there would be, said Cdre Walker, plenty of work for the ship, the ship's company and the mix of Merlin, Sea King and Lynx helicopters, to do.

"There are still communities out here which we've not found, but which will need help. That's where Illustrious comes in."

"She offers a magnitude of assistance over what Daring has already provided – more people, more stores (500 tonnes), and more helicopters which can fly further."

For there is a job still to do, even if the attention of the world's media has re-focused elsewhere. No longer saving life. No longer offering immediate assistance. The task now is to help communities get back on their feet in the short term.

Despite the immense effort – by British charities, by the British government, by the British military, to say nothing of the Filipinos themselves and the international community – the relief mission has barely scratched the surface of the devastation, destruction and disruption.

"The scale of devastation from Typhoon Haiyan is just huge," says Cdre Walker.

"The saddest thing is that it's the people who are the most impoverished who have suffered the most."

"There are people who've lost everything, people who are having to start their lives all over again – they don't have insurance."

"In the outlying islands, people use boats as you would use your car in the UK. Their boats were washed away, driven ashore or smashed."

"There is huge suffering out here – and it has not been over-exaggerated by the media."

Reporting from HMS Daring by Samantha Chapman



JACK

BY TUGS



Locker shocker is pipe dream

WITH reference to the letter in November's Comments page – *Rum Locker*.

There were kit lockers, spud lockers, oilskin lockers and even Davey Jones' locker, together with several other 'lockers' whose names are not suitable for publication.

There was, however, never a 'rum locker'.

Pussers Rum was, until 'Black Tot Day' (July 31 1970), stowed in the Spirit Room, bung-up and bilge-free in small barrels (firkins) and earthenware jars.

When 'Up Spirits' was piped, Neaters (one gill) for Senior Rates was issued, followed by 'Hands of the Mess for rum' (grog*, ie two parts water and one part rum – one gill – for victualled members of the ship's company over the age of 20, unless temperant.

Not many of the latter, I might add. Favours

could be obtained with 'tot currency' eg subs for duty, particularly at weekends in harbour.

* The term 'grog' arose in 1740 when Admiral Vernon, Commander in Chief, West Indies ordered the daily rum ration to be diluted with water.

The Admiral's nickname was 'Old Grogam' on account of his habit of wearing a grogram boat cloak. In 1824 the ration was reduced to a 'gill' once a day unless 'Splice the Mainbrace' was piped.

– Michael A Carrigan
(Jack Dusty 1951-79)
Warrant Officer SA (RN Rtd)
Weymouth
Dorset

P.S. I shall not be ex-anything until crossing the bar.

A gun captain's tale...

I AM sitting in the Somme Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

At the table with me is Mickey Gardner, the author of and perpetrator in the missing paybook story (*Navy News* August, page 44).

Mick is trying to plead his guiltlessness, to me, an ex-regular Navy man!

As his account of the escapade is accompanied with a beer, I listen without comment.

But suddenly, he turns from his protest of innocence and draws my attention to the item and photograph on page 12 of the paper.

There, with a background of smoke from Warspite's 15in guns, pointing skyward, are the twin barrels of my 4in AA mounting.

I was the captain of that gun during the Sicily, Salerno and Normandy bombardments!

Above my gun can be seen the noisy multiple Pom Pom, which was damaged by one of the three controlled bombs aimed at Warspite, off Salerno, and which then plunged down into the boiler room, where most of the damage to the ship occurred. This, in turn caused our perilous towed voyage through the Strait of Messina to Malta.

– Jack Hall
(LSQR2 at that time)
Dartmouth, NS Canada



● The IWM photo that brought back Jack Hall's vivid memories featured in August's edition of *Navy News*

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.



Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*, nor can we reply to every one.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues. The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.

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Generous jackpot

TO MARK the 43rd anniversary of Black Tot Day earlier this year, Pusser's Rum generously donated two ceramic 'Nelson's Blood' decanters as special prizes for the best letter writers in our November and December *Navy News*, instead of the usual 'Jackpot' bottle of Pusser's Rum.

Each special-edition ceramic decanter (pictured right) holds one litre of three-year-old rum at 42 per cent ABV – which normally retails for around £99 and is sought after by collectors.

■ *December's winner is appropriately a man who knows his rum (and his lockers) – Michael Carrigan (letter printed left).*



All is not lost in Lossie - Happy days

TWO of my mates and I decided on a run ashore to Lossiemouth village in company with three Wrens back in 1968.

We managed to cram into a car and obviously started off in the Coulard, first stop outside the main gate.

After a while the ladies started to get a bit restless, announcing that they wanted to return to the Fulmar Club where the pop group The Searchers were due to play.

This was a downer considering we had purchased a crate of MacEwans Best, for consumption down on the beach after the pubs had closed.

We duly took the aforementioned ladies back to the camp with the intention of returning ashore to resume a loving relationship with the crate.

Unfortunately, we were stopped by the MoD Police on the way in where they searched the car and found the object of our affection in the boot with a lot of tutting and finger-pointing.

To cut a long story short, we

were all charged with smuggling alcohol into the camp and found ourselves at the Captain's Table.

The Captain was the legendary pilot Capt Eric Brown, who listened to our story with, I am sure, a twinkle in his eye, and admonished us all.

My two mates and I made a beeline for the tot queue which we had been sure would have to function without us.

The pop diva Diana Ross was in the hit parade at the time so we joined the queue singing loudly: "This is the Captain of your ship - admonished".

The best tot I have ever tasted. Happy days!

One of the Wrens and I are now happily married grandparents living in retirement in the Black Isle, about 40 miles from Lossiemouth.

Who says crime doesn't pay?

– Keith Brill (Ex POSA)
North Kessock
Ross-shire

Review

ON TUESDAY August 11 1965 while serving in HMS Osiris we had the honour of participating in the Clyde Royal Fleet Review.

The highlights of this event included representatives of the ship's company being able to meet the Queen.

The Captain was entertained to lunch in HMV Britannia and the First Lieutenant attended a reception.

Four members of the Senior Rates mess also attended a tea party in the hangar of HMS Centaur.

A notable moment here was when one of the group three times shrugged off an insistent prod by an Admiral (who only wanted to introduce him to Her Majesty.)

When Britannia sailed we thought we got a special wave when the Queen saw our proud 13 on the side of the fin.

– Norman Leslie
Bangor
Co Down

Fate of X-5

I was interested to read about X-5 in November's *Navy News*

To my knowledge it is only supposition (but is most likely) that she was sunk by Tirpitz gunfire. No confirmed wreckage has ever been found. Also, it is not really known whether or not she had dropped her charges under or near the target. It is/has been a 'bone of contention' with Henty-Creer's family ever since as he was not similarly awarded the VC but a MID (Mention in Dispatches) instead.

I was Navigating Officer of the 'mother' submarine Thrasher, which towed X-5 to the fjord and waited for her return to the 'pick-up' RV, hours and hours longer than decreed, to no avail!

We even went much closer inshore to an 'unofficial' RV pre-arranged with Henty-Creer in the chance he could not make the official one! Two members of X-7 were lost but two survived.

Robert H Read
(Lt Cdr RN Rtd), Liverpool, NY, USA

Rum pudding

IN 1971 I served with the Prince of Wales in HMS Norfolk.

We were then both 21 and years later on our 60th birthdays I sent him a cheeky birthday card. Not expecting a reply, I was astonished when he wrote back thanking me and asked if I remembered his task book cookery episode when he made bread and butter pudding laced liberally with Pusser's Rum and everyone passed out!

In 1979, I was one of the bearer party for Lord Mountbatten's funeral in Westminster Abbey and I raised a glass of Pusser's Rum in his memory.

So in happy and sad times Pusser's Rum has helped me.

– Norman Davies
(RN 1963-87)
Buriton, Hampshire

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Appeal for King Alfred's bell

AS Royal Naval Reservists at HMS King Alfred look forward to celebrating their 20th anniversary in 2014 they hope to solve the mystery of the fate of the large, named bell (pictured right) being carried by three sailors from the decommissioning of Hove-based RNVR wartime training establishment HMS King Alfred in 1946.

Naval records held at the RN Historical Branch show that not just one, but possibly two, bells of that name were put up for sale, in 1946 and 1947. They were advertised by AFO (the 40s version of Defence Instructions today). The bell was put up for sale at £3; a hefty sum in those days and was possibly sold to an officer from the RNVR unit.

HMS King Alfred moved to the former HMS Mastodon (Exbury House in the New Forest) briefly in 1946 and was renamed HMS Hawke.

Should any *Navy News* readers know where the bell may be today, or could help to track it down, it would make a fitting centrepiece for our anniversary celebrations.

If the present owner does not wish to part with the bell it would be interesting to

learn more about its history; whether it was cast originally for the World War 1 vessel named HMS King Alfred.

Ship's bells are totemic symbols to the named ship and have inherent value to its people.

When babies are born to the families of the serving ship's company, holding a christening ceremony on board the ship, the family is entitled to have the child's name inscribed inside the rim of the bell.

There is a story that the last child who has their name inscribed may have first claim on the bell.

The smaller replica bell in the King Alfred building

that is now home to Hove's Leisure Centre is not the bell that we seek, which is larger and of an earlier vintage.

If we cannot find the bell HMS King Alfred will investigate commissioning a new bell to mark our 20th anniversary and to ring in the renaissance of the Reserve Forces under government plans to expand, invest and further integrate the Maritime Reserves alongside their regular counterparts.

Write to me at the address below or email NavyMR-KingAlfredEng@mod.uk

— Cdr A Stickland RD RNR
HMS King Alfred,
Whale Island, Portsmouth,
PO2 8ER



● Naval ratings carry the HMS King Alfred bell from the Hove RNVR unit when it was decommissioned in 1946



● HMS Euryalus in Sydney Harbour in 1945

Golden memories of Sydney

READING the account in November's *Navy News* of HMS Daring's visit to Sydney to commemorate the centenary of the Royal Australian Navy with some 34 ships of various nations in the harbour took me back to New Year's Eve 1945-46.

I stood in Martin Place, Sydney, with thousands of Servicemen and 'Sydney-siders' awaiting the New Year.

The British Pacific Fleet was in harbour, the ships' companies all waiting to go home at the end of the war, the RAN, the American Pacific Fleet, the harbour was chock-a-block! At midnight every ship sounded off on their sirens – an explosion of sound!

I was based in RNB Sydney, HMS Golden Hind, at the time, watchkeeping in the SDO and still have some wonderful memories of Sydney, which I thought was a beautiful city.

— W Rines
Taunton
Somerset

Boy Drummer Battling paddle tugs

I HAVE just finished reading the November issue of the *Navy News*, which as always, was an excellent publication.

I was particularly interested in the letter from Tom Vincent who, in 1947, was serving in RNH Haslar and clearly enjoyed watching HMS Vanguard leaving Portsmouth on February 1 heading for South Africa carrying the Royal Family.

He goes on to say that he received his 'Splicers' as Vanguard sailed and at Haslar

when Vanguard returned on May 11. I wonder if Tom was over 20 when he had his 'Splicers'?

I was a 15-year-old Boy Bugler/Drummer in the 55-piece Royal Marines Band, embarked in Vanguard for the Royal Tour and comprised of 'star' players from the three Divisional Staff Bands of Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth, under the direction of Maj Vivian Dunn RM.

Probably the largest Royal Marines Band to serve on a warship.

The Royal Family received a tremendous reception wherever they visited on the continent and the ship's company enjoyed memorable hospitality at the various points of call.

— Colin Bowden
Malvern
Worcs

Sea King marked in time

TO COMMEMORATE the retirement of the Sea King from the Naval Service, a special edition watch has been designed and manufactured by two brothers, Nick and Giles English – both pilots themselves.

The luxury watch company Bremont has a rich heritage involving vintage aviation, including supporting the Royal Navy Historic Flight.

Only 180 of these watches will ever be produced; one for each Sea King to see service in the British military.

Along with the owner's name, each watch will have an individual aircraft's serial number engraved on the case back, along with a certificate authenticating the relationship between watch and aircraft.

Prospective buyers may even nominate their choice of aircraft serial number, and personalise their certificate to reflect their own experience with that aircraft. As a bespoke military project, Bremont are kindly offering this watch at a considerably subsidised price.

For more information, please visit the website: www.SeaKingWatch.com or contact Lt Jonathan Duke at 849 Naval Air Squadron, RNAS Culdrose, Helston, Cornwall.

— Lt Jonathan Duke RN
Helston
Cornwall

YOUR photograph of HMS Vanguard aground brought back memories as my enclosed photo of the ship shows (right).

We were near the harbour entrance at Southsea waiting for her to pass.

What I didn't know until I saw your picture that they were still using paddle tugs in 1960.

— Gordon Smith
Ackworth,
Pontefract
Yorkshire



Lose the lanyard

THE sailors' uniform of today is so much smarter, cleaner and superior to that of our rough serge, tight-fitting jumpers of yesteryear but why, oh why must we retain that silly piece of string called the lanyard?

Originally the lanyard was attached to the sailor's knife and was housed in the breast pocket of the jumper.

It was abolished during World War 2 for fear of a close quarters enemy using it as a noose!

Additionally it was never worn when carrying out rifle drill.

I think the smart appearance of a formation of a group of male and female sailors is spoilt by the untidiness of the lanyards all lying in different directions.

Get rid of it, I say – the money saved could go towards the purchase of another ship!

— Doug Barlow
42 years man and boy
(former Lt Cdr RN)
Emsworth, Hants

Ruffled feathers

FORGIVE me for being a 'nit pEcker', but with a surname like mine I just had to 'fly' to the aid of the birds pictured on page 17 of the November issue of *Navy News*.

Whilst the text of the article 'Grey Planet' is correct in identifying four of the five birds depicted, unfortunately 'Monty' is not a kestrel but a Peregrine Falcon (*falco peregrinus*).

This misnaming is carried on in the caption to Monty's picture, and the photograph below should be captioned 'Sacred Ibis and Spoonbill' whereas it is described as 'A pair of African Sacred Ibis'.

I am sure you will have many letters correcting these errors but you did really ruffle my feathers!

— Lt A E Bird RN
Washingborough
Lincoln

Counting ships

WITH reference to the letter from Mr K Akerman in October's *Navy News*, I feel he may be thinking of the publication of the centre pages of the *Daily Telegraph* and *Morning Post* dated May 20 1959.

The article was to show how the Royal Navy had been reduced in size in 1959 from what it was in 1950, and all the named ships were shown in their class or group.


The ships were shown in silhouette together with their names, and the list indicated what ships were available in 1950; which ships had been disposed of or scrapped; which ones were still available in 1959 and which ones had been built between those dates.

Of the 460-plus ships that are listed, 220 were disposed of during those nine years and it may be difficult to appreciate but during that time, 12 aircraft carriers were lost to scrap or disposal, although eight were still left.

A fleet of 110 new coastal minesweepers was available, most of them ending in 'ton' – although many were never used by the Royal Navy.

The statistics for the other classes of ships were similar – battleships, cruisers and minelayers, destroyers and frigates, as well as submarines and minesweepers. It was definitely a different Navy in those days.

— A R Mason
Fareham, Hants



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RN pair in Somali mission

SANDY setting. Military compound with barbed wire perimeter. Personnel from a myriad of nations.

If you're thinking Royal Navy Commanders Mark Barton and Dain Thorne – being decorated here by the host nation's Minister of Defence (*above*) – are in Afghanistan, you're wrong.

This is Somalia – a compound at Mogadishu airport, and the hub of efforts to bring stability and security to one of the world's most troubled nations.

For six months the two Naval officers were the only UK advisers on the European Union's Training Mission (Somalia), working with the country's government and military to train troops.

Tackling the roots of Somali piracy involves stabilising the country – hence the need to build up Somalia's military.

So far, thanks to the European mission, around 3,000 troops have been trained – a quarter of the country's total strength.

Up to the end of 2012, those troops were trained in Uganda, but from 2014 all will receive instruction in their native land.

As part of the EU's evolving role, the emphasis is switching to mentoring and advice, with a new HQ in Mogadishu.

That HQ – accommodation, hospital, offices and a security force – was set up in four months during the RN officers' time in Africa and marks the highlight of their achievements in Somalia.

The pair were honoured for their efforts establishing the HQ by Somali Minister of Defence Abdihakim Mohamoud Haji-Faqi, with president Hassan Sheikh Mohamud looking on.

"What the mission is doing is worthwhile," said Cdr Barton, a marine engineer who was on the design team for the new aircraft carriers, and has completed tours in both Iraq and Helmand.

Cdr Thorne, an air engineer officer, added: "Making Somalia a better place has a direct impact on the UK."

"And there's a lot of good work being done to that end. It is a derelict place, but it is rebuilding."

The new HQ has been set up in the area around the airport, with the base supporting the international peacekeeping mission a secure compound, guarded at all times.

Personnel leave it only in armoured convoys – there's no sightseeing around Mogadishu, but during daylight you can walk or run around the camp.

In the evenings, unlike in Helmand, you could relax with a beer – although the bar closes at 8.30pm and personnel rarely partook.

There is, however, no NAAFI – not even a convenience store – so nowhere to pick up even the barest of essentials.

It is classed as an operational tour – and whilst not a safe land, Cdr Barton says the situation was not as edgy as Afghanistan.

"I never felt the nervousness, the same tenseness that I felt in Helmand," he said. "In Helmand you were always half-expecting to be it – but not in Mogadishu."

The two officers have now completed their six months' tour.

Dorothy remembers fledgling Seahawk

A FORMER Wren who served in the Royal Navy during World War 2 paid a nostalgic visit to RN Air Station Culdrose in Cornwall for the first time in 63 years.

Dorothy Reed, now in her 80s, was given a VIP tour of facilities to see how today's Fleet Air Arm compares with her recollections of the newly-commissioned HMS Seahawk in 1947.

Dorothy signed up for naval service on her 18th birthday in 1945 and served as a Steward Writer in wardrooms at Devonport, Plymouth and Greenwich, where at the end of hostilities she was demobbed.

Not content with such a short spell in uniform she immediately re-enlisted, signing on for a further period, and was drafted to Seahawk in May 1947.

The Fleet Air Arm's newest air station had only been open a month when Dorothy and her colleagues arrived.

"I remember walking through the gate to be greeted by loads of work still going on," said Dorothy.

"Everywhere huge hangars and structures were going up.



● Dorothy Reed as a Wren in the 1940s and back at Culdrose in 2013

It was very exciting having just come out of a war."

In spite of the passing of years Dorothy clearly remembers those early days.

"I worked in the wardroom serving the officers – it was hard work but very enjoyable.

"There were about 20 girls in the section, divided into two watches, Port and Starboard. The officers lived in very sparse accommodation, and each room was very basic.

"It was all very glamorous with



the young pilots – they all seemed so very handsome."

Looking at the current accommodation, Dorothy said: "It's amazing how much it's different from my days – they have all the mod cons and much more room than we did; it's much nicer.

"But I think I'd miss the company of being in a cabin with the other girls like we were."

During her tour Dorothy visited 820 Naval Air Squadron and chatted with some of the

women on the squadron before being treated to a cream tea courtesy of the Unit Personnel Office.

"It was marvellous to chat with the girls; some of them are married and have children, which wasn't possible to do in my day if you wanted to remain in the Service."

Dorothy also has fond memories of her time off: "We were given a 'Make and Mend' every week and were encouraged to do an activity.

"There was archery and gardening, but I loved swimming, which we did in nearby Loe Bar.

"We would walk down to the beach and have swimming parties before walking into Porthleven.

"There were about 150 Wrens based here then."

Dorothy spent over two years at Culdrose, and when she met her future husband moved on to HMS Nuthatch, an FAA base near Carlisle, finishing her time in the Wrens two weeks before she married.

"If I could have stayed in I would have done. I loved my days in the Wrens."



Trophy for top trainee

A STELLAR performance by a trainee engineer has won him a prestigious prize.

AET (Aircraft Engineering Technician) Scott Grant (*above*) has been presented with the Telegraphist Air Gunners Association (TAGA) Trainee AET of the Year Award during a TAGA parade at HMS Sultan.

He landed the trophy for his outstanding performance during his Phase 2 A+B training courses, gaining a course average of 91.56 per cent during Phase 2A.

Scott finished the training with the highest overall marks within the Royal Navy Air Engineering and Survival School's Academic year 2012-2013.

Since completing 15 months' training in April Scott has gained valuable experience serving as part of a three-week detachment in France, where he was able to service the Sea King Mk 7 ASaC (Airborne Surveillance and Control) as part of 849 Naval Air Squadron from Culdrose.

Alongside his core training at Sultan, Scott spent a substantial spell with the boxing squad.

With the season almost over when he joined, he was unable to represent the establishment competitively, but coaching staff were so impressed that they contacted the coach of the RN squad at HMS Nelson.

Tipped to be a big success, he went into training for the Combined Services Boxing Association Championships.

Scott said: "I felt honoured and thrilled to receive the award. Having worked hard throughout training I felt good knowing that all the hard work I had put in had been recognised."

Torbay to Torbay

CREW members of the submarine HMS Torbay have trekked from their home base to their affiliated borough of Torbay.

The submariners took five days to complete the 81 miles between Devonport Naval Base and Paignton using the South West coastal path.

The boat's Commanding Officer, Cdr Andy Johns – who walked the final leg of the expedition from Dartmouth to Paignton Pier – believes that Adventurous Training provided a welcome opportunity for team-building ahead of a busy operational programme next year.

"Activities like the Tortrek provide members of my ship's company with a welcome break and change of scenery from our demanding maintenance period," he said.

"However, it also helps to develop leadership, teamwork and physical fitness, which ultimately helps me to deliver



● Trekkers from HMS Torbay set off from Devonport Naval Base – destination Paignton Pier

operational capability as I look to generate my team for operations next year."

The expedition had a core team of eight walkers who walked the whole distance, joined by four additional 'day walkers' every day, led by mountain leader CPO Robbie Robertson, HMS

Torbay's weapons group chief.

Further members of the crew backed the event as support crew, assisting with camping arrangements, meals and first aid coverage.

The expedition provided a welcome break for sailors who were supporting Torbay as she

approached the end of an extended deep maintenance period.

Cdre Richard Farrington, Commodore of the Devonport flotilla of ships and submarines, met the trekkers in person at one of their overnight stops and was hosted over a pub dinner in East Prawle.



● Sailors from HMS Collingwood round up Southampton's herd of fibreglass rhinos

Sailors round up urban rhinos

SAILORS from Victory Squadron at HMS Collingwood were given the unusual task of rounding up a herd of almost 100 rhinos from Southampton.

Ten honorary 'keepers' accompanied by staff from Marwell Zoo in Hampshire visited sites across the city to collect the fibreglass animals, which featured in the Go! Rhinos conservation campaign.

The 97 brightly-coloured figures were placed in prominent sites as a 'sculpture trail' for ten weeks in the summer, but the sailors had just two days to collect them, remove the plinths and clean them up.

They also helped repair any damage, as 36 large rhinos and one small were earmarked for a charity auction, which raised £124,700 for local charities and the zoo's conservation programme.

Kirstie Mathieson, Project Manager for the Go! Rhinos campaign, said: "The trainees at HMS Collingwood played a crucial part in the de-

installation of the Go! Rhinos trail in Southampton.

"They helped with all elements of the de-construction, from collecting small rhinos from around the city, to wrapping them up so that they would travel safely back to the zoo, to helping us remove some of the large rhinos from the trickier positions.

"We really couldn't have done it without them." ET(WE) Connor Hamilton said: "We've all had a great time – it's been nice to get involved with a project that's been embraced by a community like this one has."

The efforts of the sailors – who also helped install the animals at the beginning of the campaign – were rewarded with an afternoon visiting some of the other (real) animals at Marwell.

Go! Rhinos was led by Marwell in partnership with Wild in Art, Business Solent and Southampton City Council.

Ronnie joins the 4,000-day club

FOUR thousand days at sea is a career landmark most sailors would want to celebrate.

One Royal Navy sailor marked the occasion with an extraordinary physical challenge.

WO1 Ronnie Scott marked his 4,000th day at sea outside UK waters ('separated service' in Navy parlance) with a 4,000-repetition fitness circuit on the flight deck of RFA Fort Victoria.

As *Navy News* went to press the auxiliary was due to start her journey home from the Middle East, where she was on on counter-piracy operations with Combined Task Force (CTF) 151.

Ronnie and ten other 'fifties' fought through the pain barrier to pump out press-ups, sit-ups, squats, bench jumps, bicep curls and other torturous circuit moves in soaring Gulf heat and humidity. WO Scott, aged 50, beat off competition from younger counterparts to complete the challenge first, hitting the target in just under two hours.

He said: "It was totally exhausting but I am chuffed to have beaten the competition in such a quick time.

"I'm just glad it wasn't my 5,000th day at sea – another thousand reps would've been tough."

On reaching 4,000 days, WO Scott said: "It has been hard being separated from my family for so many days throughout my career.

"But the life experience of seeing the world, different cultures and of working with different navies has broadened my horizons more than I ever thought possible."

Now working as a Battle Watch Officer for CTF 151, WO Scott helps coordinate efforts to deal with piracy incidents in the Gulf.

He now belongs to an exclusive club of just over 100 RN sailors who have notched 4,000 days – equivalent to almost 11 years.

Cdre Jeremy Blunden, Commander CTF 151, said: "While many officers and sailors in the Royal Navy accrue over 3,000 days, passing 4,000 days separated service is relatively rare and is a significant event for any Service person."

He added: "WO Scott should also be proud of his level of fitness and stamina."

Engineers pay visit to carrier

A GROUP of seven sub lieutenants on the Surface System Engineering Management course paid a visit to Rosyth to see the RN's new aircraft carrier in build.

Along with course manager Lt Alex Goddard, the group – based at HMS Sultan – were given an introduction to the project by Queen Elizabeth's current Senior Naval Officer, Capt Simon Pettitt.

They were then given a presentation by the Senior Engineer, ranging from the F35B Lightning II through to the challenge of operating the 65,000-tonne carrier.

The group visited the flight deck, sickbay, automated magazine systems, operations room, engine rooms and ship's control centre.

Sub Lt Alex Chenery said: "The scale of the work going on here is very impressive.

"As a junior engineer, this was a fantastic opportunity to look around the carrier as she'll be the flagship of the Navy for most of my future career.

"The technology on board gave us a real insight into how the RN is going to progress as more and more new platforms come into service."

Colleges share knowledge

THE head of the Royal Danish Naval Academy has paid a visit to Dartmouth for an insight into Royal Navy officer training.

During a two-day visit Cdr Senior Grade (s.g.) Gustav Lang was briefed on the 30-week initial naval training course.

He was invited to see part of the four-day maritime assessed leadership exercise which takes place on the River Dart – the final test of the second phase of training in which cadets take charge of their own vessels and operate as a task group.

Capt Jerry Kyd, CO of BRNC, said: "The Royal Danish Naval Academy is the Danish equivalent of BRNC, so our roles are the same in that we are both charged with providing fresh faces to our respective Navy's Officer Corps.

"At BRNC we strive to provide our cadets with the best possible preparation for their future roles as leaders.

"I'm sure this is a goal we share with the RDNA, and visits such as the one made by Cdr Lang, allow us to share training methods and ideas which is enormously beneficial for both navies."

Cdr Lang said: "I am very grateful for the opportunity to visit BRNC, and to see for myself how the Naval training and education is planned and conducted the British way."

He added: "The RDNA is in a time of change towards new education programmes, shortening the entire time at the Academy from some 60 months to about 30.

"We will have to give up a lot of routines and standards, but in place we have an outstanding opportunity to revive and rewrite the entire educational programme.

"This visit to our friends in the Royal Navy provided me with very many good ideas and impressions."

The Danish officer said he looked forward to returning to Copenhagen to "spread the news among my entire staff and of course, indeed the cadets."

The Royal Danish Naval Academy was established in 1701, and is the oldest still-existing officers' academy in the world.



● Trainee sailors from HMS Raleigh clear one of the walls at Ford Park cemetery in Plymouth

Picture: Dave Sherfield

Trainees clean up historic cemetery

TRAINEE sailors from HMS Raleigh have combined the skills they learned during basic training with their experiences in civilian life to help out at Ford Park cemetery in Plymouth.

Two groups of 15 new recruits spent a day each at the cemetery, clearing the weeds and ivy from the cemetery's walls.

Working at the cemetery allowed them to put into practise skills they had learnt over the previous ten weeks, including teamwork, leadership and communication.

Some were also able to bring knowledge of the task in hand from their civilian employment.

Trainee ET Darren Fletcher said: "Before I joined the Royal Navy I was a landscaper and we had three different contracts at three different churches.

"It's nice to be in the outdoors and give something back to the community as a thank you for what they give to us.

"Volunteering to help out like this gives us a great feeling of satisfaction and it builds up our team skills."

Ford Park Cemetery's rich

history made the work all the more worthwhile for the recruits.

Trainee AET Ashley Frost said: "I think it's great for us to do something like this.

"It's nice working in an area where Victoria Cross holders are buried and we've also seen quite a few Royal Navy graves."

A charitable trust was set up in 1999 to take over the ownership and management of the cemetery.

Chairman John Boon said: "As

a charitable trust we can only employ a small number of staff to maintain the 34-acre grounds.

"Our grounds team are able to maintain the grass and the grounds, but there are other jobs which they haven't got time to do.

"In the area just inside the lodge gates all the walls had overgrown with ivy and the team from HMS Raleigh came in to remove it from the wall and clear-up the area generally.

"This is the area that is presented to the public. It's the area they see when they first come in.

"To have it looking as good as it does now thanks to the guys from Raleigh is absolutely brilliant. They've done a fantastic job.

"They've been hard-working; they've been friendly; they've been interested in what goes on and they've been a credit to the Royal Navy."

Church grateful for help

AIR engineer trainees from RN Air Station Culdrose gave a helping hand clearing paths and ditches around an ancient church near their Cornish base.

When parishioners of the picturesque village of St Mawgan in Meneage, less than two miles from Culdrose, put out a call for assistance to help clear vegetation from church grounds, they didn't know what enthusiastic support CPO Jon Walsh would have at his disposal.

Jon was able to draw upon several training units – 824, 849 and 771 NAS – who pulled together 16 Phase Two air engineering trainees, and over two days got them organised to assist in clearance operations.

"I managed to get some gardening tools from the Senior Rates mess on the air station," said Jon, who works in the Naval General Training Section.

"Our primary aim was to clear the gullies and drains to reduce the risk of damp seeping into the

church's exterior walls."

Wendy Bailey, secretary of St Mawgan in Meneage, said: "The church is a Grade I listed building dating from the 13th Century and it is important to keep this area clear to prevent damp entering the structure.

"The church is very grateful for the help, and it emphasises the good relationships between the parish church and the base, which forms a very important and major part of Mawgan parish.

"The work of Jon Walsh and his amazingly hard working team was very much appreciated.

"They were absolutely wonderful. A really lovely bunch that were very polite, took a real interest in the church, worked hard and did a simply splendid job, a real pleasure to know them all.

"We are getting too old to get down into these gullies so we can't thank them enough."

Meal was icing on the cake

FLEDGLING Royal Navy chefs at HMS Raleigh have been showing off their newly-acquired skills by treating their families and friends to a five-course meal.

The nine chefs were in the penultimate week of their 26-week Defence Chefs course at the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS).

To celebrate their success, loved ones travelled from far and wide to visit the school, try their hands at some of the skills and taste the fruits of their loved ones' labour.

With the help of their instructors the chefs worked together to devise a menu of butternut squash soup with cheese twists and fresh bread rolls to start; a fish course of salmon with cured whiskey marinade; stuffed chicken breast with cous cous and turned vegetables for main; a dessert of mascarpone and raspberry tart with home-made

ice cream and raspberry coulis; finished off with coffee and hand-made chocolates.

Speaking of her son James, Caroline Thornton said: "I'm very proud. By signing up for the Royal Navy James has done a very brave and hard thing, and the fact that he has achieved a qualification which normally takes over two years in a civilian college, I think is very impressive."

James said: "I've learned a lot of new skills and techniques during the course. It's been quite challenging, but that makes it all the more of an achievement."

Lt Cdr Gary Manning, OC Catering Services Squadron, said: "The standard of food that these young chefs produce after a relatively short period of training is nothing but exceptional.

"They should be very proud of what they have achieved."



● Instructor Phil Roberts watches as Chef James Thornton shows his mother Caroline the intricacies of cake decoration

Picture: Dave Sherfield



Sopwith prize for Merlin

A CORNISH team led by an Orkney-born Royal Navy officer has received a top award which has links with the Scottish islands.

The Merlin helicopter flight of frigate HMS St Albans, based at Culdrose, has been presented with the Sopwith Cup, awarded annually to the helicopter flight which achieves and maintains the highest level of operational capability for that year.

It is the first time it has been awarded to a Merlin team.

The Sopwith Cup was introduced in 1967 to commemorate the first deck landing at sea which took place in Scapa Flow on August 2 1917.

The St Albans flight is under the command of Lt Cdr Edwin 'Coops' Cooper (above), who hails from Orkney.

The officer said: "It has been an incredibly high tempo year for us with many challenging operations and exercises.

"I am very proud of the team. To receive a trophy with a direct connection to Orkney and only a few years away from the centenary of the first deck landing is also personally very memorable."

Edwin and his team – four aircrew, ten engineers and one aircraft controller – were most recently based on board the helicopter carrier HMS Illustrious during the Cougar 13 deployment, sharing a much larger flight deck than that of the frigate with aircraft such as Chinooks and Apaches.

"In a few years, the Royal Navy will operate the huge Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier along with F35 Joint Strike Fighters and the next generation Merlin Mk 2 helicopter," said Edwin.

"For those wishing to have a career in the RN, I cannot think of a more exciting time to join up."

Liverymen call in on HMS Sultan

REPRESENTATIVES from the Worshipful Companies of Plumbers, Founders, Turners, Shipwrights, Engineers and Fuellers visited HMS Sultan to update their understanding of the Royal Navy and to promote the range of modern engineering training undertaken.

Guests were welcomed by CO Capt Trevor Gullely and briefed on the various departments, followed by a wider presentation by the RN Presentation Team.

They were then hosted to lunch followed by tours of the training schools.

Sultan enjoys affiliations with a number of livery companies based in the City of London.

These companies, some of which date back to the Middle Ages, were originally developed as regulators for their trades, but now act primarily as charitable organisations – including the sponsorship of prizes that are routinely awarded to Sultan's trainee engineers.



Branches honour Immortal Memory

THE victory at Trafalgar was celebrated by 70 members and guests of **Market Harborough** branch at a five-course formal dinner at the town's golf club.

The toast to the Immortal Memory was proposed by Cdre Mark Slawson, and during the evening the Arctic Star was presented to S/M David Hill, who served on Russian convoys at the age of 17.

■ In a break from tradition of a large gathering to celebrate Trafalgar Night, **Bourne** branch this year held a smaller version for members and wives/lady friends and the branch padre.

Rev Sheena Cleaton led the ship's company in prayer, after which everyone enjoyed roast beef with all the trimmings.

As usual Ships of the Line were paraded and once again set off the smoke alarm – a tradition for Bourne...

■ **Plymouth** branch members convened at the Sefton Hotel, Babbacombe, for their tenth biennial Trafalgar long weekend.

Representatives from **Frome, Launceston, Saltash, South Bristol, Stroud** and **Tewkesbury** branches attended, enjoying an excellent weekend with entertainment every evening.

S/M Adrian Nance was guest of honour at the gala dinner on the Saturday evening, while the Sunday church service was conducted by branch chaplain Rev Peter Warland.

■ **Brentwood** branch mustered 18 members and guests on Trafalgar Day itself for their annual lunch.

After an enjoyable meal, branch vice chairman S/M Ken Wright spoke about how Nelson was considerate towards his men and in return was loved by them.

■ On the other side of the Channel, **France Nord** branch held a Trafalgar Day luncheon at the Brit Hotel, Relais du Mont.

More than 30 members and guests enjoyed a fine three-course meal with wine, and the age-old tradition of 'splice the mainbrace' applied.

The after-dinner speech was given by branch president S/M Mark Whelan.

The branch meets for lunch at many venues across Brittany and Normandy, normally on the third Thursday of the month.

No military background is required – just the enjoyment of a social gathering and good company. See the website <https://sites.google.com/site/nafrancenor/> for details, or contact Liz Yeowell at raymond.yeowell@neuf.fr

■ Guest speaker at the **Harrogate & District** branch Trafalgar Night Dinner was Lord Willis of Knaresborough, who gave an interesting and enlightening talk of what goes on in the House of Lords.

He also displayed the Seal of Investiture to his peerage, presented to him by the Queen.

Branch president S/M John Stray spoke of the younger years of Nelson, from the time he joined the Royal Navy until he took his first command of a ship.

The tradition of 'Up Spirits' was observed and issued from the rum tub by branch secretary and 'rum bosun' S/M Dougie Pointon.

As well as toasts to the Queen and to the Immortal Memory of Admiral Lord Nelson, S/M David Porritt proposed the toast to Absent Friends.

Amongst the guests were members of **Bradford** branch, the **Ripon Royal Engineers Association**, **Harrogate RAFA** and **Harrogate Sea Cadets Committee**.



Picture: LA(Phot) Ben Shread

Former commandos gather at Lympstone

HUNDREDS of members of the **Royal Marines Association** paraded at the Commando Training Centre RM as part of their annual reunion weekend.

The reunion was an opportunity for veterans and their families, who had gathered from all over Britain, to mix with their old comrades.

It also gave the former bootnecks – whose span of combat operations covered every

conflict involving British forces from World War 2 to Afghanistan – a chance to meet the newest recruits at Lympstone and see the latest military hardware.

The parade was the culmination of a weekend where veterans were able to take part in activities including shooting the latest assault rifles and watching a Royal Marines Band concert.

During the parade veterans were inspected by Commandant General RM Maj Gen Ed Davis, after which they marched past

the officer – some in wheelchairs, some with guide dogs.

With them on parade were three Recruit Troops, Young Officer trainees and the RM Band.

At the end of the parade the families of Royal Marines who died during the past year laid wreaths at a memorial wall next to the parade square.

"It's funny because as a young Marine I spent most of my time trying to avoid parades," said L/Cpl Brian Beniston, who was at Limbang in Borneo in 1962, scene

of a famous Commando raid.

"Now the irony is I'm volunteering to be on one..."

"It's a great chance to meet old friends from around the Corps."

Brian continued: "The training now is the same but the equipment is completely different."

"The weapons we had when I joined up are in museums now."

Bill Harris said: "I passed out of training in 1947 and immediately joined HMS Indomitable."

"I then joined HMS Liverpool before transferring to HMS Ocean and was involved in the EKOA Crisis in Cyprus in 1956, attached to 45 Commando."

"Eventually I was medically discharged and given a weekly pension of 12 shillings."

Brian Lunt, who served from 1962-1972 and was involved in the Aden conflict, said: "There's no change with lads now as when I was in. They're just as grumpy these days..."

"I love coming back here," said Alan Edghill, who served from 1974-86.

"I like the brotherhood and comradeship. I started coming to these events when I was 50."

Col Dave Kassapian, the Commandant at CTCRM, said: "This weekend's annual gathering of the RMA sits at the heart of the Commando Training Centre's calendar year."

"It reinforces all that is good about the Royal Marines family, ensuring that comrades-in-arms stay in touch, and that all veterans and their families have the chance to return to the *alma mater* of the Corps."

"Standing alongside Recruits and Young Officers on the parade square and at the bar, it confirms our mantra of 'Once a Marine, always a Marine'."



● Ted Wicks, Peter Danks, Alf Larkin and John Garrard at the St George's Centre, Chatham

Picture: Cliff Hoppe

River Plate pair join reunion

THE 48th annual reunion of the **HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association** was held at the King Charles Hotel in Gillingham.

The 50 members were delighted to welcome S/Ms John Garrard and Ted Wicks to the gathering – two veterans who served in the light cruiser HMS Ajax at the Battle of the River Plate in 1939.

Approval has been given for a Battle of the River Plate memorial to be erected at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, with the unveiling planned for April 12 next year.

This will be the first of three events to mark the 75th anniversary of the South American battle in 1939 – see the association website www.hmsajax.org for details of the other events.

The association is in touch with five veterans from Ajax, two from heavy cruiser HMS Exeter and one from Ajax's sister ship HMS

Achilles (all three were involved in the hunt for and destruction of the German 'pocket battleship' Admiral Graf Spee).

But there may well be other veterans and/or their families who

would be welcome at these events.

For further details contact the association via the website or archivist Malcolm Collis at malcolm.collis@gmail.com details can be given.

Well up to required standard

LEE-on-the-Solent and **Stubbington** branch have dedicated their standard in HMS Collingwood's church.

In attendance were branch members and their guests, seven standards from Area 3 branches and shipmates from Aldershot and Netley branches.

The service of dedication was conducted by the branch's honorary 'Bish', Rev Janice Honey Morgan, and guests included National President S/M John McAnally, the Mayor and Mayoress of Gosport, Cllr John and Mrs Christine Bevis, S/M Bob Scott, Chairman of Area 3, S/M Peter Reed (Area 3 National Council Member) and S/M Rita Lock, Vice President.

The standard was carried by debutant S/M Alan Port, whose performance was described by a senior Area 3 standard bearer as "a very good effort for a first timer..." – high praise indeed.

On completion of the service a small reception was held during which the Certificate of Office was presented to the new branch president S/M John Lavery by the National President.

Shipmates tour air base

THE American air base at Mildenhall played host to members of **Brentwood** branch, along with shipmates from **Romford** and **Dagenham** branches and Brentwood Sea Cadets.

The tour of the base started with security control and then entry to the busy control tower.

The next stop was the flight control offices, where aircraft being sent all over the world had their flight plans confirmed.

After a roast beef lunch there was a tour of the base, and then members were given unrestricted access to one of the huge active KC135 refuelling aircraft.

The visit came about as the result of friendships formed at the annual commemoration service in September 2012 for the crews of two US bombers which crashed in Brentwood borough in 1943.

Many of the visitors' guides on the tour and the base commander, Col Nancy Bozzer, attended this year's commemoration, allowing members to thank them once again for such an enjoyable and informative visit.

↓ RNA HQ, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.

↓ admin@royalnavalassoc.com

↓ 023 9272 3747

↓ www.royal-naval-association.co.uk



Gravesend floored by kind donations

FOR some years the parquet dance floor at the Gravesend branch club house in Northfleet has been degrading steadily.

The cost of replacement or refurbishment proved hard to put together in the current climate, but shipmates arrived at the point a few months ago where they really needed to do something as loose tiles were becoming a hazard.

The need for action became even more pressing when the local branch of the Royal British Legion started holding meetings there, followed by a retired association which requested regular meetings at the club after their old meeting place closed down.

The branch took the problem to a delegates meeting of 2 Area, hoping they may be able to kick-start a funding package to help with the costs.

What happened next was beyond anything that they could have imagined.

First, area delegates agreed a sum far beyond what Gravesend expected.

Then at the suggestion of the committee, a request was put out to other branches in the area to see if they could help – the result was quite astounding.

To date four branches from 2 Area have come forward with generous donations, to the point where the floor refurbishment became manageable and they were able to proceed.

So, it is with a great deal of thanks to the help they have received that the branch's refurbished floor is looking as good as new – and with a little luck they can continue making their increasingly-popular club house a better place to be.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our October edition (right) was HMS Glamorgan, later known as Almirante Latorre.

Brian Beer, of Plymouth, wins £50 for providing both names.

This month's ship (above) was one of a class of more than 90 inshore minesweepers built in the 1950s, and was named after a village in Gloucestershire.

She spent part of her latter years, into the 1970s, doing torpedo recovery work on an overseas station – (1) what was her name, and (2) where was she stationed?

We have removed the pennant number from the image.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw

MYSTERY PICTURE 226

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

Destroyer veterans mark end of an era

A FORMER senior officer in the Royal Navy has paid tribute to the work of the Type 42 destroyers and the men and women who served in them.

Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks, formerly Rear Admiral Surface Ships, was the guest speaker at the Type 42 Association's End of an Era dinner, held in the Painted Hall of the Old Royal Naval College at Greenwich.

In his eulogy to "these wonderful and outstanding ships who have served the Royal Navy, our country and their ships companies for nearly 40 years", Rear Admiral Wilcocks spoke of the birth of the class at a time of austerity during the Cold War.

He observed that the ships proved to be good value for money, even allowing for escalating costs through the build programme.

The admiral said that the 42s had been "everywhere – in times of peace, tension, combat and war."

The Sheffield class saw action from the cold stormy waters of the South Atlantic to the warmth of the Mediterranean, the Caribbean and East Timor and the intense heat of the Gulf, he said.

Admiral Wilcocks observed that the Sea Dart missile has lived up to and exceeded its design spec, the ships' Fighter Controllers and air teams handled Harriers in the Falklands, worked with UK and allied aircraft in the Caribbean, Med and Adriatic and performed with distinction during a plethora of deployments



● This painting of a Type 42 silhouetted against a sunset in the Gulf was commissioned for the Type 42 End of an Era dinner. The original, by Portsmouth artist Julia Pankhurst, raised nearly £2,000 in a raffle, but a limited edition of 500 prints is also available, starting at £40 for a medium-sized print. "I felt privileged to be asked to do a painting for such a prestigious and poignant event, and I'm very happy that it raised a lot of money for charity," said Julia. See <http://pankhurstgallery.com> for details

to the Gulf.

"There is barely a UK operation that has not involved a Type 42 or more, perhaps with the one exception of the Afghanistan land campaign – and I suspect that was not for the want of trying!" he said.

"Our country has had huge value for money for the investment made in these remarkable ships."

The admiral gave a snapshot of the highlights of each ship – Sheffield, Birmingham, Newcastle, Coventry, Glasgow, Cardiff, Exeter, Southampton, Liverpool, Nottingham, Manchester, York, Gloucester and Edinburgh.

He also reminded his audience of some of the distinctive memories of the class, including:

■ The power of their machinery plants: "Who cannot remember the sound of the two Olys winding up to full power without a shiver down their spine?"

■ Their manoeuvrability "and the sounds from the galley when going starboard 35 at speed";

■ "Watching the flight commander's face when he was invited to do an aft facing landing for the first time";

■ "Firing of Sea Dart at night";

■ "Doing Officer of the Day middle watch rounds of the big after mess decks when the boys had had a beer and curry run ashore;"

■ "But above all, their graceful lines, justly meriting the title 'greyhounds of the ocean'."

He described the ethos and spirit of the destroyer community, formed more than 100 years ago and hardened in battle, whether in the actions of the small World War 1 ships throwing themselves at the German battlefleet or the 42s protecting British forces around the Falklands almost seven decades later.

"Destroyers have for over 100 years been the workhorses of the Fleet – and our Type 42s have maintained that legacy for 40 of those years," said Rear Admiral Wilcocks.

"Those of us who have served in these wonderful ships can be justly proud of our achievements – of our service to our comrades, our Navy, our Allies and to our country."

Commending the creation of the Type 42 Association, whose standard was paraded on the evening and whose leader and driving force is S/M Bob Mullen, Rear Admiral Wilcocks described it as an "outstanding performance – first reunion already achieved, the next being planned for 2015, and plans being formed to create a memorial to the ships and their people at the National Arboretum."

Trainees inspired by history

SAILORS from HMS Collingwood took the opportunity to live up to their motto when they travelled to London to support a war veterans' event.

The Phase 2 trainees took heed of the Victory Squadron maxim 'Inspired by history to train for the future' when they and squadron support staff helped out at the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships event.

The Annual Veterans Cruise saw 15 vessels involved in the evacuation of some of the 350,000 Allied troops from the Dunkirk beaches in 1940, take a trip down the Thames between Weybridge and Kingston.

The sailors' presence at the event, attended by Prince Michael of Kent, ensured that all ships were manned during proceedings, which saw many attendees receive the Atlantic Star award.

The occasion also gave the trainees a rare chance to meet with veterans who had been involved in historic events including D-Day, the Dambusters raid and the Dunkirk evacuations.

PO Stuart Flack said: "I met a 93-year-old who had received a Dunkirk medal. I could tell he loved the day – he enjoyed telling his war stories with such a smile on his face.

"He'd also been involved in the Battle of Britain.

"It's been quite an honour to be involved – when you think there are only a handful of these people left, and in a few years this part of history will be gone.

"All our sailors have conducted themselves so well, they should be proud.

"I can't think of a better way for them to experience the motto of Victory Squadron."

Battle memories

S/M Norman Robinson, of Skipton branch, has received his Arctic Star – at a particularly poignant time of year.

The 89-year-old was serving in HMS Belfast when the cruiser took part in the destruction of the German battleship Scharnhorst at the Battle of the North Cape on Boxing Day 1943.

"That is why every Boxing Day since 1943 my thoughts go back to the North Cape, Norway and to the sea battle that occurred that day," said S/M Norman.

"I remember the tragic loss of life, both German and British, and have thanked God I survived."

Plaque unveiled to Founding Father

THE final resting place of a Founding Father of Australia has been found and acknowledged – in the same churchyard as one of the Royal Navy's great navigators.

The search for the tomb of Rear Admiral Henry Lidgbird Ball began when the now-retired Lt Cdr Ted Bourn spent two years on exchange with the Royal Australian Navy from 1984-86, in the role of Navigating and Operations Officer of the RAN's tanker HMAS Supply.

The ship took her name from the 175-ton armed tender that sailed with the First Fleet from Britain to Australia in May 1787, arriving in January 1788.

It was quite a voyage for the smallest and oldest ship of the 11-strong Fleet, used almost exclusively by the Royal Navy for nearly three decades to transfer supplies around the South Coast of England.

But under her captain, Lt Henry Lidgbird Ball, she made a name for herself Down Under, being the first European ship



● Rev Tim Marwood of St Peter's Church helps as Australian High Commissioner Mike Rann unveils the plaque to Rear Admiral Henry Lidgbird Ball in the churchyard

into Port Jackson (now Sydney) – Botany Bay having been found to be unsuitable – and also as the vital supply lifeline for the fledgling colony after the loss of the other RN escort with the Fleet, HMS Sirius.

Ball – who also discovered Lord Howe Island – later returned to Australia and married one of the convict women, dressmaker Sarah Partridge, whose death sentence for stealing £9 worth of silk had been commuted to seven

years' transportation.

The officer was later promoted to rear admiral, and died at the age of 61 in 1818, but there appeared to be no record of his grave.

Back in the UK, Lt Cdr Bourn decided to set about finding exactly where the late admiral was finally laid to rest.

The search took some years, but finally – harnessing the expertise of his sister-in-law Pauline Clarson – Lt Cdr Bourn was directed to the graveyard of St Peter's Church in Petersham, Surrey, where the grave of the great explorer Capt George Vancouver is also to be found.

Even then it took sterling work by members of the church to locate the vault, as the epitaph had been all but eroded over the years.

To mark Ball's status as a Founding Father of Australia, a new plaque has been added to the tomb, which was unveiled at a ceremony attended by British and Australian dignitaries.

On Warfare – career plotting

DECEMBER and January's Drafty's Corner is sponsored by the Warfare Officers' Career Managers (CMs).

This month they will address the PWO and Fleet Air Arm specialisations of Warfare Officers, while January's column will cover Mine Warfare and Diving, Specialist Navigating Officers, Submariners, HM and Intelligence specialists, and will discuss Optours, security vetting and provide a full CM contacts grid.

The Warfare CM team is based in West Battery, Whale Island, and provides career management for every Warfare specialist from Sub Lt to Lt Cdr.

General Service Warfare (GSX)

The traditional career route remains one of the best ways to set yourself up for a successful warfare career.

The early warfare assignments afloat on operations provide the core professional skills required on PWO course, and the vital experience required to command a warship.

The value of time at sea on the bridge of a warship, whatever size and shape, cannot be underestimated.

The pinnacle of your time in the GSX plot is undertaking a tour as a Fleet Navigating Officer, which is one of the most privileged and responsible positions.

With responsibility not only for navigational safety but also the cohesion and coordination of the bridge team – still a key sensor in a warfighting unit – there is the opportunity to develop shiphandling skills, warfare knowledge and perhaps most importantly, leadership.

Drafty's corner



No matter what role or task you are undertaking, it is also imperative that every opportunity is taken to complete your Bridge Warfare Qualification (BWQ) and Ops Room Certificate (ORC) early while keeping a record of your achievements within the Command Competency Framework (CCF - 2012DIN01-244).

For more advice and help on the GSX plot contact CM OF WAR JOSO2.

Principal Warfare Officers (PWO)

Attendance at PWO Course remains the primary route for warship command – as a Lt Cdr, Cdr and Captain.

On course, the experience gained as a bridge watchkeeper, FC, MCD, MWO, HM, INT, AV or SM is brought together with warfighting skills, drills and tactical decision-making to form a PWO who can plan, coordinate and conduct maritime warfare with ships, aircraft, helicopters and submarines.

The PWO will gain valuable management and organisational experience acting as Operations Officer and Warfare Head of Department.

There is then the opportunity to specialise with Warfare AdQuals (AWO, ASW, N or CIS) or to broaden in a wider second PWO tour employment, for example, with an Operational or Training Staff and in NCHQ.

Attendance on PWO course is by selection (2012DIN01-267 refers).

The only pre-requisites are completion of the Ops Room Certificate (available from MWS PWO Section) and a positive Command recommendation.

Thereafter, the selection is made on merit. Competition remains fierce, and the onus is very much on the individual to become eligible and to demonstrate the potential to justify this further level of warfare training with the challenge, responsibility and opportunities it brings.

Fleet Air Arm (FAA)

Regeneration of fast jet, fixed wing naval aviation remains the FAA's priority in order to meet the delivery of the next generation of aircraft carriers; the Queen Elizabeth class (QEC), in 2018.

The Sea King and Lynx helicopters have resolutely served the RN over the past six decades and are about to be replaced by more modern glass cockpit variants.

The venerable 'Junglie' Sea King Mk4 will eventually be replaced by the green Merlin; an extensive upgrade to the RAF's Merlin Mk3 will see it 'ship enabled' and enter service as the Merlin Mk4.

This means the Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) will continue to provide the RN's littoral, support helicopter role well into the next decade and will be a key component of Future Force 2020 in support of the Response Force Task Group (RFTG).

The ASW helicopter role has been carried out by the Merlin Mk1 for over ten years and has just completed an avionics upgrade package.

The challenge now is to convert the ASW Force to the new improved Merlin Mk2, which includes a night-vision capability.

The Lynx helicopter force has adopted the mantle of the Lynx Wildcat Maritime Force (LWMP) as it transitions to

the Wildcat Force where it will fly the Helicopter Maritime Attack (HMA) Wildcat Mk2, as distinct from the Wildcat Army Helicopter (AH) Mk1, which will also be flown by CHF's 847 NAS.

Both RN and Army Wildcats are to be stationed at RNAS Yeovilton.

Flying training of *ab initio* pilots and observers continues apace, with General Service officers competing for places post BWQ and successful grading; Gains to Trained Strength (GTS) will start to increase once all training squadrons regain optimum training capacity.

New initiatives will see all FAA officers able to qualify for BWQ and the new PWO(AV) will see experienced aviators competing alongside GS(X) officers for Battle Staff and OpTour jobs.

During this period, the FAA CMs will continue to focus on ensuring that we create, employ and retain Suitably Qualified and Experienced Personnel (SQEP) in order to populate the structure we need to meet the demands of the Future Force 2020.

Throughout this period of turbulence, personnel will be selected – using the RN definition of merit – to ensure that we identify and select those with genuine potential for long term investment.

Command Qualifications (CQ)

Achieving Command should be the aspiration of every Warfare Officer, regardless of sub-specialisation.

The Command Competency Framework (CCF) (2012DIN01-244) and CQ DINs (2012DIN01-243/245/246) bring together a number of initiatives aimed to improve the 'Route to Command'.

The Flotillas have continued their mentoring initiative for those looking to achieve CQ, and MWS will support this with simulator familiarisation.

For those officers not employed in a flotilla, the relevant Squadron Executive Officers stand by to offer advice on how to take advantage of the

mentoring process.

CQ Board places are now more frequent to provide more opportunity within taut operational and ship programmes.

How to get in touch

Career management – of individuals and the plots – is always time-consuming.

An email is preferable, as it allows the CM time to examine the plot and investigate options before replying.

If the matter is urgent or affects Ship's OC, a phone call may be more appropriate.

When to get in touch

You should make contact with your CM with around 12 months left in post. Any earlier than this and the CM will not be able to gauge performance in your current post.

This initial discussion will allow both you and your CM to agree a realistic future availability date and gives enough time to identify your follow-on assignment.

Why you should get in touch

CMs are interested in changes in your preferences, your address, your personal circumstances and any other information that you think may have a bearing on your career plans.

Career Interviews (CI)

If you are content with your next assignment and do not require a more in-depth look at your promotion or transfer prospects, then you probably do not require a formal CI.

If you do, then a proforma will be sent out prior to the interview – please complete this honestly with as much information as possible, including desired effects, preferences, priorities and aspirations.

The 'Service need' takes priority in all assignment decisions, but the CM will endeavour to match this against personal preferences wherever possible.

2SL sends invitation to extend

In November, the Second Sea Lord sent the first of 7,000 'Offer to Extend' letters, which are being addressed to Naval Service personnel as a result of the new pension scheme, Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015.

The 'Offer to Extend' invites individuals to serve for longer in order to meet the needs of the new pension scheme, and is being sent to people at their JPA addresses between now and Christmas.

Each 'Offer to Extend' letter encloses a decision form, which after careful thought, should be signed and returned to the AFPS 15 Career Extension Cell, in NCHQ.

The offer applies only to those who will be serving from April 1 2015 onwards, were born after April 1 1967, and are serving on a Full Career engagement or Career Commission (or equivalent).

If you are serving on one of these engagements or commissions then firstly, you should check that your address details in JPA are correct and, if they are not, contact the CEC; secondly, if you do not receive an offer letter by the end of January 2014, you should also contact the Cell.

To find out how the offer might affect you, full details can be found in Galaxy 35-2013, and DIN 2013DIN01-216.

Top employer

THE Naval Service has been recognised for its progress on gender and race equality.

Placed in the Top 10 Public Sector Employers by the *Opportunity Now* and *Race For Opportunity* organisations, the recognition reflects the Service's commitment to diversity and inclusion and endorses the policies set in place in recent years.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel said: "I am absolutely delighted. This recognition is important for all who are a part of the Royal Navy today and

sends an important message to those yet to join and the nation we serve."

Cdre Jon Pentreath, Gender Diversity Advocate for the Naval Service, said: "I believe passionately in all our people being given every opportunity to reach their full potential.

"This really pleasing result recognises our progress in diversity and inclusion, and the vital contributions our Servicewomen make alongside their male colleagues, across the globe."

Workplace survey online

BIG questions about the way women experience life in the workplace are at the heart of a new national initiative – Project 28-40.

Launched on November 15 by *Opportunity Now*, the online survey closes on Sunday December 15 and aims to canvass up to 100,000 working women – a national survey on an unprecedented scale and the first of its kind.

Project 28-40 is about listening to what women have to say and taking action to change the status quo, according to organisers.

The focus is on women aged from 28-40 since this is a critical phase for career development where women do not continue to be promoted at the same rate as men.

They also want to hear from older and younger women, as well as men, to help identify the specific issues to address.

The survey will only take 15 minutes to complete and covers such questions as how women make their life choices, work ambitions, the impact of workplace culture, role models and other influences.

Join the debate at www.project2840.com

Inspiring the police

AMONGST the seven keynote speakers at the Metropolitan Police Service's event 'Women's Day of Inspiration' was Lt Cdr Mandy Bright, the first female Officer-in-Charge of RN Police Special Investigation Branch.

Chief Constable of Surrey Lynne Owens and members of the Specialist Crime and Operations (SCO 11 Surveillance Command), including police officers and civilian police staff, listened as their Naval counterpart charted her journey from non-seagoing Wren into the Navy's Police Service.

Lt Cdr Bright used her experiences to articulate the way

the employment of women in the Naval Service has changed over the years.

The conference aimed to acknowledge the positive contribution of female employees in this specialist department, with the speakers sharing their achievements in their chosen careers, describing their experiences and how they had overcome any obstacles encountered.

Lt Cdr Bright said: "I was one of seven speakers, including police staff and other role models such as Davina Douglass, a survivor of the London terror attacks.

"SCO 11 faces similar challenges in recruiting and retaining women, and some of the issues raised can be aligned with Service life.

"My speech was received very well, and initial feedback is that the day was a success.

"They were particularly interested in the work of the Naval Servicewomen's Network, and the RN's Diversity and Inclusion team."

The Naval Servicewomen's Network latest update and news is available on the Defence Intranet.

Duke of York opens new learning centre

THE Duke of York has opened a new education and resettlement centre in Devonport Naval Base for sailors, their families and civilians.

Housing an e-learning centre, technology-enhanced classrooms and an internet-enabled reference library, the facilities are available to provide foundation skills in literacy, numeracy and IT, GCSE maths and English as well as a range of courses delivered by external providers.

Lifelong learning is the focus of the centre, which also provides advice and funding to service learners and those preparing for resettlement into civilian employment.

Lt Alastair Ramsay, in charge of the centre, said: "The Duke took a lot of interest in the new facility.

"He was clearly impressed with the range of opportunities available and the fact that it is being achieved by such a small, dedicated team."

"A lot of time and effort has gone into creating the new centre, so we were delighted that it was officially opened by such a high-profile guest."



● The Duke of York enjoyed meeting staff at the new Education and Resettlement Centre including OIC Lt Alastair Ramsay.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon

Maths and English e-learning courses are available for learners to undertake for promotion while other studies include NVQ and IT qualifications.

Tutor support from qualified staff is readily at hand and advice

is also available on all areas of personal and professional development, from GCSEs to a master's degree.

Personnel can get resettlement advice from the Centre at any time in their career.

NEED to get your message across?

To feature in the Navy News' Two-Six pages contact Navy Command Media – Internal Comms Staff Officer:

Lt Cdr Emma McCormick, 93832 8809, email

(Dii) NAVY MEDIACOMMS-IC-TL

(External) NAVYMEDIACOMMS-IC-TL@mod.uk

NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION Spelling out ten top years



AS NAVY News readers will be aware, the Naval Families Federation has now been in business for ten years, and to mark the occasion Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel challenged the Chair of NFF, Kim Richardson, "to throw a party" to mark the occasion (*Jane Williams writes*).

With the gauntlet laid down and the challenge presented, what else could be done than to rise to the task?

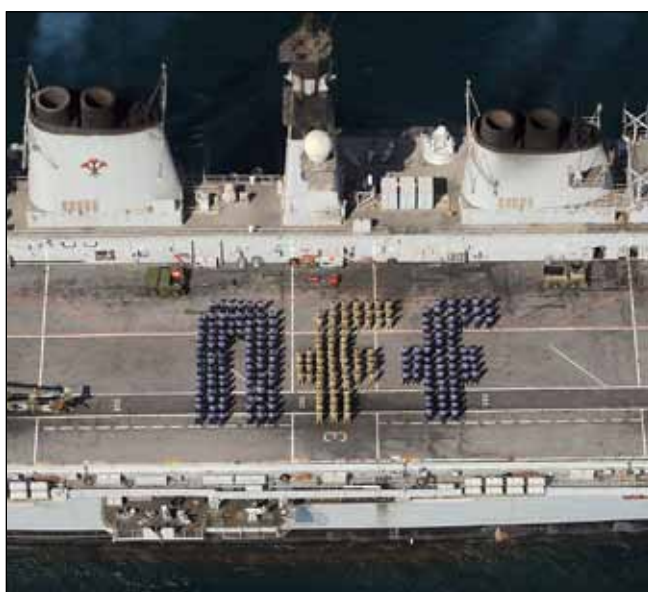
With the very generous support of several business sponsors we were able to make the event cost-neutral to the NFF.

The sponsorship, coupled with the fantastic support of the Wardroom at HMS Excellent, enabled us to deliver exactly what Admiral Steel had tasked us with.

One aspect that we could not have foreseen was the catastrophic failure of all the building IT, and we now know that some of the people who we really wanted to share the evening with did not receive the email invitation.

We are really sorry – please do keep in touch as you will be on the list for the 25th anniversary party!

The newly-appointed



Picture: LA(Phot) Nicky Wilson

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Anna Soubry, the Second Sea Lord, Commandant General Royal Marines and Commander Amphibious Forces, Maj Gen Ed Davis, and the Service Complaints Commissioner, Dr Susan Atkins, all attended the reception alongside more than

200 families, personnel and stakeholders – and not forgetting Kath the cake lady for her wonderful support.

With the Minister having only been in post for some two weeks at the time, to say that we were delighted by her support is a huge understatement – in fact, this was her first stop on her hectic schedule and the first

opportunity to visit the Royal Navy in her new role.

We feel that this really says something about how important the views of the families of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines are considered.

Vice Admiral Steel said of the NFF: "It has some of the most dedicated individuals you can find who do all they can to ensure that our families are informed, supported, listened to [and] cared for as necessary."

"The NFF is the organisation to go to if all else fails. It is the organisation to go to when you don't know where else to turn. It is often the friendly face of Service complexity. It is an organisation in which our families can and do have complete trust."

"To me, the NFF means so much. The demands of looking after the Navy's people – especially during a period of austerity – are acute."

"Without the NFF I am absolutely sure that we would not have been able to retain the goodwill of our people during such difficult times, or to shape personnel and family policy for the Navy of the future."

"Happy Birthday NFF – and thank you."

Anna Soubry said: "Behind each and every crew member is a family. Wives and husbands, fathers and mothers, sons

and daughters – each, in their own way, displaying a level of fortitude every bit as impressive as the sacrifice and service of our Naval men and women."

"The family might be the backbone of the Navy, but the NFF is proving a bedrock for our Naval families. Keep providing our personnel with that essential sounding board... Keep being our critical friend... And, no matter how rough or choppy the seas ahead, together we will ensure the Navy keeps our nation secure and prosperous for decades to come."

NFF Chair Kim Richardson said: "We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who makes it possible for the NFF to offer families a voice. We wouldn't be here ten years on without you."

We were also completely blown away by the fantastic gesture of the ship's company of HMS Illustrious for organising a very impressive photex of the NFF logo on the flight deck; Wow – thank you (*pictured left*).

Prior to redeploying to the Philippines to support the humanitarian operation, approximately 250 members of the ship's company formed up on the flight deck in the shape of the organisation's logo.

WO Neil 'Butch' Cassidy, who co-ordinated the event using his team of gunners, told us: "The formation and the execution of the NFF image was a genuine team effort incorporating ship's company, carrier air group and the landing forces."

"The resulting image is something illustrious and the NFF can be duly proud of."

Lt Cdr Olly Hanks, Deputy Commander Logistics, added: "As one of the largest grouping of deployed Naval Service manpower, Illustrious felt it was appropriate to mark the fantastic assistance we and those back home receive from the Naval Families Federation."

On a more sombre note, our thoughts and best wishes are with all the families of Naval personnel who will be apart over the Christmas period.

Do visit the website www.nff.org.uk or find us on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. Alternatively e-mail: editor@nff.org.uk to subscribe to our free, quarterly *Homeport* magazine

General e-mail the NFF on: admin@nff.org.uk or telephone: 023 9265 4374.

Postal correspondence can be sent to: NFF, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.

Humanists growing interest

A PRESENTATION on Humanism in the RN aimed at informing Devonport's Equality and Diversity Advisors was delivered by LNN Matt Hicks, the RN representative for the United Kingdom Armed Forces Humanist Association (UKAFHA).

The talk explained UKAFHA relating the organisation to the main themes of the conference – networking and role modelling.

The key point of Matt's presentation was the observation

that people are happier if they make positive (rather than passive) decisions, both professionally and personally, based on the best knowledge and evidence available.

LNN Hicks said: "This is what humanists are all about, except that we make our decisions and respond to the world and the people around us with the mindset that human experience is all that is available to us."

"Humanists are a group of people who have a naturalistic

view of the world, who do not subscribe to any belief in supreme beings, the afterlife or pre-determined purpose."

Integral to the humanist approach is trusting discovery of the universe to scientific method and evidence, using this approach to place human welfare and happiness at the centre of their ethical decision-making.

Humanists hold their own unique, non-religious ceremonies for the important moments in their lives such as weddings or births, or in remembering the lives of loved ones who have passed

away.

These are conducted by trained, accredited, humanist celebrants.

UKAFHA is a growing network which represents Service personnel, veterans, civil servants and their families who share a similar humanist outlook.

This support may range from providing information about Humanist Celebrants to discussing how to contribute positively to Service life, its traditions and ceremonies alongside the many religious groups.

UKAFHA is also working with various religious groups on common aims and with open, friendly discussion about

their differences and similarities.

Within the RN, humanists have a positive relationship with the Chaplaincy and chaplains of the various faith groups.

Humanists within the Forces are a growing group who aim to meet twice a year at Amport House, the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre near Andover.

If you have a similar outlook or have any questions, LNN Matt Hicks's contact details can be found on the Defence Intranet Diversity and Inclusion website.

The UKAFHA community page is also on the Defence Intranet.

More information about Humanism can be found at https://humanism.org.uk/

New Employment Model – Phase 2

THE New Employment Model is a ten-year programme launched in April 2011 with the aim of delivering a more modernised set of conditions of service for regular and reserve personnel.

At its heart is the need to better balance the demands placed on Service personnel and their families through greater domestic stability while maintaining operational capability.

Phase one of the consultation with Service personnel and their families was completed in September this year.

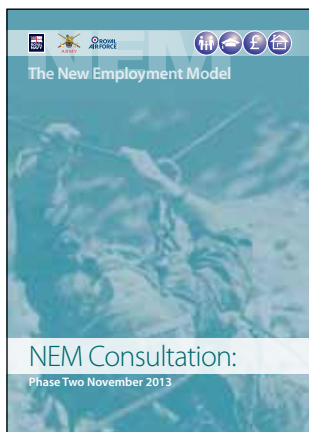
During Phase 1 more than 800 Service personnel and families took part in focus groups and interviews.

Approximately 14,000 personnel were briefed on the NEM during roadshow presentations, and 12,000 people accessed the high-level survey.

Phase 2 of the consultation consists of a survey which is now being distributed.

Emails will be sent to individuals in the first instance by the NEM project, encouraging people to complete the survey online.

Hard copies of the surveys will be distributed via the designated point of contact (usually the EWO



or RSM) for large units or direct to individuals at small units.

The questions are relevant to the feedback from the previous phase, arriving from either the focus groups/interviews or the online questionnaire.

The survey focuses just on those areas of policy development where the project needs better understanding. This is your chance to influence your future.

Point of contact is Cdr Mark Barton: Tel: (mil: 93832 8928), (NAVY PERS-FP3 SO1)

Christmas post script

KIND-HEARTED members of the public have been requested to show their support for deployed forces through Service charities rather than sending unnamed mail to deployed personnel this Christmas.

In previous years, the British Forces Post Office (BFPO) has received a high volume of gifts and parcels intended for personnel on operations in Afghanistan and around the world, including RN ships.

As this mail can cause delays to personnel getting post from their loved ones, members of the public are being urged to donate to Service charities instead.

The best way to support personnel on operations abroad is to make donations to approved charities such as uk4uThanks! which works with BFPO to make use of any spare space in the existing supply chain.

The uk4uThanks! Christmas Box appeal, which has sent festive boxes to personnel for seven years, ensures a gift 'on behalf of the nation' is sent at



● HMS Northumberland received 180 bags of mail on her last port of call in Oman just before Christmas last year.

Picture: LA(Phot) Maxine Davies

Christmas to all forces personnel working overseas.

People can donate to this and other charities now to show their support and appreciation, and are encouraged to do so rather than sending gifts by post.

This year over 18,000 boxes will be sent all over the world

using spare space in military transport – not putting additional strain on BFPO at Christmas.

uk4u would like to thank all our sponsors and members of the public who donate, without whose support we would not be able to send the boxes.

For more detail see DIB 45/13.

Where to look

GALAXYS

Galaxy 34-2013 –

Announcement of a change in the length of the Officer Career Commission

Galaxy 33-2013 – Courts Martial of Royal Marine - Anonymity Order

Galaxy 32-2013 – Naval Service recognised for gender and race equality

DIBS

DIB 57/13 – New Employment Model second phase of consultation with service personnel

DIB 52/13 – New government security classification scheme

DIB 45/13 – Public support for our deployed personnel and sending gifts at Christmas

RNTMs

RNTM 249/13 – Narrowboats availability for 2014

DINs

2013DIN01-212 – The Introduction of new powers to test personnel undertaking safety critical duties for drugs and alcohol

2013DIN01-214 – Accommodation booking in HMS Neptune (this DIN supercedes 2012DIN04-046)

2013DIN-215 – Support fund for state schools with Service children 2014 (this DIN supercedes 2012DIN01-247)

2013DIN01-217 – Royal Navy and Royal Marines reporting instructions for personnel undergoing FOST training. (this DIN supercedes 2012DIN01-209)

2013DIN01-223 – Naval Service terms of service – change to the length of the RN and RM Officer Career Commission

2013DIN01-231 – Aggregation of separate periods of service between AFPS 75 and AFPS 05 – an explanation of changes to EDP legislation

2013DIN07-138 – Joining instructions and training requirement for RN boardings covering boarding teams, ATCC SERE and XERES training



Exceeded expectations

PROFESSIONAL services manager Oliver Stevenson is just coming to the end of a successful nine months of mobilised service conducting security duties with P Squadron, 43 Cdo RM in the Gulf.

Sailing from Bahrain on RFA vessels, his tasks at sea have included identifying, reporting and covering suspect vessels and, due to his additional skills in photography, he also provided imagery from the region for the team leader for use by the Operational HQ.

Oliver, from HMS King Alfred in Portsmouth, is serving as an AB Sea Warfare, and said the deployment exceeded his expectations of live operations.

He said: "I found I was well prepared, even though I joined an established team of regular RN personnel. With the excellent training I received both in the RNR and at 43 Cdo, I found my skills were up to the task."

Oliver provided a visible armed deterrent and helped to develop a strong working relationship between the Force Protection team and ship's company. Oliver added: "Working together, we were able to support the ship's watch routines, include them in our daily circuit training and provide additional weapons experience."

"I've now seen a world that I never would have been exposed to had I not joined the RNR."

"The volume of shipborne trade moving across the seas and through the ports is staggering."

"The Navy's contribution to protecting trade in these times has never been so vital."

"I have now developed an interest in the intelligence aspect of operations and I plan to pursue this further in my RNR career."

Oliver's boss at Banner Managed Communications, Mark Buckingham, said: "BMC are pleased to support the Royal Navy in its operations overseas and I am personally very proud of what Oliver has achieved in his time in the Royal Navy Reserve."



Old Shipmates meet new T45

FOUR members of HMS Sussex Old Shipmates Association – HMS Sussex was a former RNR Division based at Shoreham – recently visited HMS Duncan, the Royal Navy's latest Type 45 destroyer.

They were given an extensive tour of the ship whilst it was alongside at Portsmouth.

Members Brian Mitchell, Anthony Manning-Coe, Neville Dutton and David Walker (pictured above) enjoyed a comprehensive guided tour hosted by the ship's Lt Will Yoxall. Former reservist CCY Dave Walker said: "HMS Duncan is a truly magnificent ship and we had a superb tour."



London call up

RESERVE Forces dropped from the skies into one of the largest Armed Forces recruitment events London has ever seen to help boost the national Reserves recruiting campaign.

The event, at Horse Guards Parade, involved hundreds of soldiers, sailors and airmen from 17 different London-based Reserve units, including HMS President, Northwood's HMS Wildfire and two City-based naval reservists who attend Portsmouth's training unit HMS King Alfred.

The Reservists were on a mission to alert Londoners to the exciting opportunities and benefits on offer to those who embark on a part-time career with the Reserve Forces.

The event saw a team of soldiers and sailors make a breath-taking parachute drop into Horse Guards Parade from a hovering Lynx helicopter.

Plenty of military kit and

equipment was on display for visitors to the demonstration of capability, including Warrior, Jackal, Mastiff, Husky and Cougar armoured vehicles, highly-mobile fire support WMK Land Rovers, missile systems, battlefield ambulances, a replica Chinook and a chance to see the Forces' new Glock sidearm.

Visitors were transported directly to the frontline by visiting a representation of an operational base, complete with field kitchen, which was constructed on site so that potential recruits could get a real understanding of military life while on operations.

Visiting the show, Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said: "This recruitment event shows the sheer diversity of our Reserves and the huge number of exciting opportunities there are for those interested in signing up."

"We are completely

revitalising our Reserve Forces, growing their trained strength with fresh incentives, better pay and more opportunities for working and training alongside Regulars.

"This exhibition highlights just how many fantastic opportunities there are for anyone looking for a rewarding, challenging and exciting second career."

Deputy Commander Land Forces Maj Gen Ranald Munro said: "Joining the Reserves is an exciting opportunity for anyone looking to do something extra with their time and benefit from a rewarding experience outside of normal working hours."

"This event aims to showcase the broad range of jobs and world-class training and development prospects available to anyone who is interested in joining or who thinks they know someone who would want to find out more."

"No matter what your skills or background are, the Reserve Forces have something to offer you – they're much more beyond military skills."

"It can take you abroad, equip you with new skills, give you invaluable experience and develop strengths you didn't know you had."

There are over 6,000 jobs on offer across several hundred different roles in the Reserves, from mechanics to veterinary technicians and fitness instructors.

Anyone from the age of 18 upwards can apply to join, subject to nationality.

Reservists typically train for one night a week, and at some weekends.

They also attend an annual two-week training exercise to qualify for a tax-free bounty on top of their daily rate of pay.

The minimum commitment is generally 28 of days training per annum, but more days are available for those who wish to contribute more.

For more information about the career opportunities available in the Maritime Reserve, either the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) or the Royal Marines Reserve (RMR) Forces call 0845 607 5555.

● London-based Naval Reservists support the city's Reserves Live! campaign.



Picture: Ben Fishwick, *The News*, Portsmouth

Seeking sailors for RNR Live!

CAUTIOUSLY moving from compartment to compartment, four armed sailors from HMS King Alfred search the training ship HMS Bristol in a force protection exercise designed to illustrate security duties that warfare branch reservists may have to conduct on operational deployments.

Their demonstration (pictured above) was a showcase for naval reservists' skills at the first RNR Live event to be held in the Portsmouth-based training unit HMS King Alfred.

The RNR training unit threw open its doors to welcome potential applicants with an interest in joining the Royal Naval Reserve and offered the opportunity to chat to reservist specialists about their chosen branches and experiences both while under training and deployed.

ABs Laurence Flint and Beth Piper were amongst those displaying their skills to the visitors. Both have completed their weapons training recently on exercises in Cyprus.

AB Piper, a student of sports studies at St Vincent College in Gosport, said: "I joined for the variety – on drill nights you get to live a completely different life and meet tons of new people."

AB Stuart Harland, another member of the search team, has just spent nine months on deployment with 43 Cdo Fleet protection group providing security for RFA supply ships in the Gulf and in UK ports.

The visitors were also able

to test their decision-making abilities by operating the new Navatar recruiting tool.

Similar to electronic role-playing games, the Navatar system places the controller in charge of various maritime operational scenarios and challenges them to make positive decisions for the team.

Cdr Anthony Stickland is determined to meet his recruiting targets.

He said: "We're looking to increase by at least 100 by 2018."

"There's a huge amount to be gained with training packages in so many skills – we get involved in a multitude of activities supporting Defence."

As *Navy News* went to press, Reservists at HMS President had just held their own RNR Live open day at their prestigious HQ on the bank of the Thames next to Tower Bridge.

London's RNR unit has seen an extensive refurbishment lately to improve the training facilities and was keen to showcase the skills of their reservists, welcoming potential applicants to experience their way of life.

A number of stances and demonstrations were laid on including warfare branch presentations, where visitors got the opportunity to take part in the activities and learn more about the branches of the Maritime Reserves.

Commanding Officer Cdr Eugene Morgan was interviewed on local television and reservists were featured in a *Daily Telegraph* video article.

Simon heads East

EXPERIENCED sailor Lt Cdr Simon Turner is back on the high seas again, this time East of Suez.

Simon was mobilised to the Response Force Task Group on the Cougar 13 deployment.

He recently spent four weeks on board RFA Mounts Bay before cross-decking to MV Hurst Point for the remainder of the deployment.

An Amphibious Warfare specialist in the RNR, he is involved in coordinating the movement of military personnel, equipment and stores from the ship to the shore or objective of the operation.

Until recently, Simon was the Support Manager at Plymouth's RNR training unit, HMS Vivid, focused on recruiting new reservists to fulfil FR20 objectives.

Simon, who left the regular Service having commanded a small ship, now runs a sail training business in Plymouth, interspersing this activity with his RNR duties.

He has participated in every type of amphibious deployment and exercise in a variety of platforms in the last ten years.

Now approaching 55, he hopes to extend his service in the RNR and continue to play an



● Lt Cdr Simon Turner in Gibraltar on RFA Mounts Bay

active part in HMS Vivid for the foreseeable future.

Happiest when training people from all walks of life in navigation and seamanship, Simon's ambition is to run a three-month sailing expedition to the Baltic, returning via the European coast of the English Channel – an undertaking which would encompass 12 countries.

He said: "I thoroughly enjoy being part of the Maritime Reserve – it provides a professional challenge as well as sporting and social opportunities."

"I can recommend it to anybody who wishes to add an extra dimension to their civilian career."



Pictures: POPhot Sean Clee

THEY came from every walk of life, but every one of them had something in common – their pride in wearing the green beret.

More than 30 Royal Marines Reservists took part in Black Alligator 13 in the Mojave Desert, California.

They joined their full-time colleagues from 40 Commando Royal Marines for a major workout at the US Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Centre in Twentynine Palms, training in hot, arid conditions.

But when Black Alligator came to an end the reservists had to return to their civilian jobs, balancing the demands of their everyday life with the intense training and commitment required to remain a Royal Marines commando.

It may not be for everyone, but the Royal Marines Reserve is looking for men like these to join the Corps and eventually take part in exercises like Black Alligator.

Twenty-three-year-old Matt Vickers is a student from Exeter, but also a marine with RMR Bristol, who deployed on Black Alligator 13 attached to Delta Company.

He said: "Taking part in exercises like this gives reservists the opportunity to use the equipment and the weapons

systems that we are trained on but we rarely get to use in the UK.

"In the Mojave Desert we have a massive area in which to practise and build our confidence and skills."

As a full-time student, Matt needs to balance his studies with the demands of being a marine reservist, but he finds the time in his busy schedule.

"I may be a reservist but that doesn't make me any less of a marine as we all undergo the same training – we're all motivated and keen to get the job done. I'm extremely proud to wear the green beret," he said.

Also on the 935 sq mile desert range was Marine Pete Madden, a member of RMR Merseyside's Manchester Detachment working with Alpha Company.

Back in the UK, the 28-year-old is also a church youth worker on Teesside.

He said: "I've been a reservist for three years now and exercises like Black Alligator are ideal as we get a lot of training packed into a relatively short period of time.

"We are always kept busy on exercise and because we're fully integrated into 40 Cdo we never feel that as reservists, we are in some way different.

"We just get on with the exercises and all of the training we have received quickly comes back to us."

● **Royal Marine Reservists experienced the heat, dust and enjoyed putting their skills to test in the great outdoors of the massive US Combat Centre at Twentynine Palms**

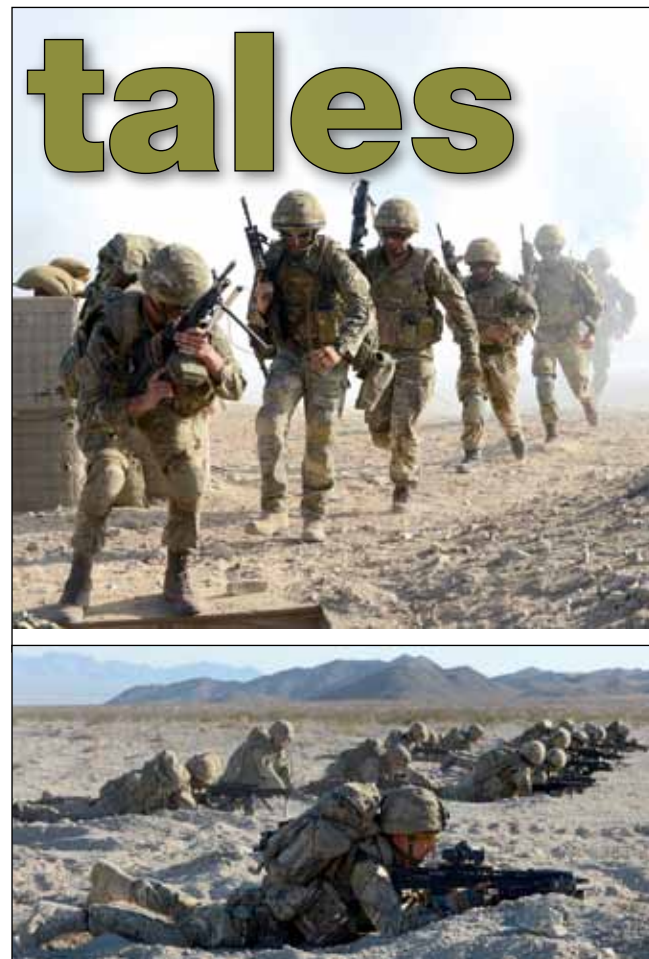
Black Alligator 13 saw more than 800 full-time and reserve marines from 40 Cdo, the RMR and Dutch Marines (RNLMC) deployed to the US.

Next year will see the men of 40 Cdo take over the nation's high readiness Lead Commando Group – a contingency force able to deploy anywhere in the world at very short notice – so training and validation of this nature is vital to ensure their combat readiness.

Maj Innes Catton, the Officer Commanding Alpha Company, said: "Training and validation of this nature is vital to ensure the combat readiness of the Lead Commando Group.

"When you have reservists alongside you see how successful the RMR works as there's no extra effort required with the reservists – they're all turbo-enthused."

The next opportunity for a large-scale RMR deployment will be to Norway in March 2014, when they will undertake cold weather training alongside the regulars of 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines.



Handy Andy aces degree

AN AIR Branch reservist who is also an ambulance service paramedic has just gained a first-class honours BSc degree in Health Studies from the University of Plymouth.

LA (Aircraft Handler) Andy Ransom (pictured above) joined the RN in 1983, serving in HMS Fife, HMS Invincible and also served shoreside in the Falkland Islands.

He later served in HMS Fearless as a reservist during the handover of Hong Kong in 1997.

On leaving the RN in 1992, Andy joined the ambulance service, qualifying as a paramedic two years later to work on ambulances and rapid response cars answering 999 emergency medical calls.

During his service with the South Western Ambulance Service Andy also served as an aircrew paramedic with the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance, and is still a member of their reserve team.

"The hardest part of completing my degree was time management," said Andy.

"Having a full-time job, a second career in the RNR and my family meant achieving deadlines was a little sporty.

"It's been hard work and my family are very proud of my success. I used the extensive knowledge gained from both my Naval and ambulance service experience to assist me to complete my degree.

"My patients benefit from the professional ethos I was taught as an aircraft handler and our branch motto is transferable to my civilian career: *Nostris in manibus tuti* – Safe in These Hands."



Picture: Peter Wooldridge

Feels like home

ASSISTANT Chief of Defence Staff Reserves and Cadets Maj Gen John Crackett paid a flying visit to the RNR Air Branch at RN Air Station Yeovilton to see how the Fleet Air Arm's reservists operate.

Gen Crackett is the highest-ranking reservist in the Armed Forces and carries the responsibility for all policies relating to reserves and cadet forces from the Navy, Army and Air Force.

Visiting Yeovilton for the first time, the general (wearing a flying suit in the middle of the picture above) soon found himself quite at home – he is a qualified pilot.

The commanders of the Commando Helicopter Force, the Lynx Wildcat Maritime Force and the Fixed Wing Force briefed their visitor on how they routinely employ RNR Air Branch officers and ratings in all the aviation specializations and trades, including RNR pilots flying the Hawk T1 on the recently-commissioned 736 NAS.

"Many Air Branch Reservists at Yeovilton are serving in key roles," said Lt Cdr Mike West, Ops Officer for 848 NAS, himself a reservist working part-time.

"My job on the Junglie Sea King training squadron requires a high degree of continuity that allows the busy and varied programme to run."

Cdr Ian Halliday, hosting the general for the Head of the Air Branch, said: "The way the Air Branch functions as a unit is going to be important in the future as more reliance is placed on the Reserve. This was a positive visit – he definitely enjoyed his day with us."

Airmen's mission for Aiden

MEMBERS of the RNR Air Branch dug deep into their pockets at their annual Ratings' Mess dinner held at HMS Sultan, boosting a charity fund for local boy, Aiden Farrell.

Every year a charity is chosen by the Air Branch to benefit from the generosity shown throughout the evening.

This year, CPOACMN Alfie Kitwood, whose civilian job entails flying from Lee-on-the-Solent as part of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) Search and Rescue helicopter flight, suggested the Aiden Farrell charity.

Aiden has cerebral palsy and needs an operation, at a cost of £27,000, that will make his life pain-free and allow him to walk unaided.

Alfie said: "Adam's a local boy living close to the base at Gosport, so when I heard he needed funding for the life-changing operation, I knew we could all help in a small way to make a big difference."

In all, the RNR Air Branch raised almost £600 for Aiden.

Aiden's parents, Sara and Gavin, are well on their way to raising the full amount but still



● From left, Aiden, his dad Gavin, CPO Sandra Parkinson, mum Sara and CPO Alfie Kitwood visit the Merlin at 764 Squadron

need another £16,000 to make it happen.

Other departments at Sultan have also held events to contribute to the cause.

Air Branch Reservists CPOs Sandra Parkinson and Alfie Kitwood invited Aiden and his family to visit Sultan, the home of the Defence School of Marine Engineering (DSMarE), and presented him with the cheque

for £600.

Afterwards, Alfie took him on a tour around a Merlin Mk 1 helicopter, part of 764 Initial Training Squadron at the Royal Naval Air Engineering and Survival School (RNAESS).

Aiden loved his afternoon with the aircraft and asked if he could come back again and bring his girlfriend Summer with him next time.



Looking back with pride

SEVENTY-FIVE years ago, in 1938, Admiralty Fleet Order 2885/38 announced the formation of the RNRV Air Branch.

Reserves had been flying since the beginnings of naval aviation but 1938 was the first time the reservists had been formally constituted. By the time the first recruits were selected and trained, Britain was at war.

RNRV(Air) personnel served with distinction in all theatres.

Post World War 2 the RNRV was merged with the Royal Naval Reserve and in 1957 the RNR Air Divisions were disbanded. In 1980 the Air Branch as we know it today was formed.

The Air Branch is proud of its heritage, and remembers colleagues who served before, many of whom made the ultimate sacrifice whilst supporting the Royal Navy.

Picture: Harland Quarrington



● (Above) Whitehall during the Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the Cenotaph. (Below) Military and civilian staff gather at Navy Command HQ in Portsmouth during the Armistice Day service



Picture: LA(Phot) Ian Simpson (FRPU E)

Naval Service pays

WITH planning well under way for ceremonies and events to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War, the theme of remembrance resonates as much as ever across the Commonwealth and beyond.

The eighth annual London Poppy Day served as a gauge of the level of response as it became the largest street collection of its kind ever held in the UK, raising £1 million in under 24 hours.

More than 2,000 members of the Armed Forces and their supporters took to the streets of the capital to raise funds for the Royal British Legion initiative.

They targeted 80 tube and train stations, Terminal 5 at Heathrow and British Airways Waterside, Cargo and Engineering, and were given extensive access to offices and workplaces.

The day saw River-class offshore patrol ship HMS Tyne berthed in Docklands as well as 20 military bands and abseiling Royal Marines.

In the run-up to the

remembrance weekend, more than 50 MPs from across the political spectrum who have served in the Armed Forces attended a ceremony at the Guards Chapel, in Wellington Barracks, to pay their respects to the fallen of the two world wars and conflicts since.

Those at the inaugural event, designed to demonstrate the parliamentarians' support for the Services, included serving or former maritime reservists Richard Ottaway, MP for Croydon South, Dr Julian Lewis,

MP for New Forest East, and Dr Andrew Murrison, MP for South West Wiltshire.

London was the focus for the nation's thoughts on Remembrance Sunday as the Queen, other members of the Royal Family, dignitaries and veterans paraded along Whitehall to the Cenotaph at the National Service of Remembrance.

Among those taking part were the RNA's National Chairman, S/M Chris Dovey, who laid an anchor-shaped wreath alongside the president

of the RBL and the other main veterans' organisations, accompanied by wreath-bearer S/M Andy Christie, Assistant General Secretary of the RNA and a veteran of the Falklands campaign in HMS Glasgow.

The following day saw another ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, at which the last surviving World War 1 widow, Dorothy Ellis, laid a wreath at the Gallipoli memorial.

London had already seen veterans of the Submariners Association pay their respects to the dead – the deeps traditionally hold their own ceremony on the Victoria Embankment a week before Remembrance Sunday.

A team of 30 serving submariners from HMS Sultan joined more than 200 members of the submariner community at a service which was first held in 1923 following the unveiling of the National Submarine Memorial the previous year.

Accompanied by the Royal Marines Band Collingwood, submariners and veterans marched to the service, conducted by the Honorary Chaplain to the Submariners Association, Rev Paul Jupp, followed by the laying of more than 30 wreaths with a salute which was taken by the head of the Royal Navy's Submarine Service and Commander Operations, Rear Admiral Matt Parr.

Another service staged before the main ceremonies saw the ship's company of minehunter HMS Hurworth pay tribute to the men of the namesake wartime destroyer which struck a mine off Kos in October 1943, taking 113 men down with her.

As well as paying their respects at the rain-lashed Portsmouth Naval Memorial on Southsea Common, a party from the current ship also travelled to Hurworth-on-Tees in the North East to take part in remembrance ceremonies.

Members of the Type 21 Association took part in the Whitehall and arboretum events,



Picture: Sgt Pete Mobbs (RAF)

● Lt Tony Eldridge, the last remaining man to pilot a two-man Chariot 'human torpedo', marches to the National Submarine Memorial with fellow veterans. Lt Eldridge took part in the final Chariot mission of the war, launching from HMS Trenchant and sinking a Japanese ship in Phuket Harbour in October 1944

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s tribute, home and abroad

as well as Portsmouth, Chatham and Devonport ceremonies. The association was also represented at a service in the Falklands when a wreath was laid at the Type 21 Memorial overlooking San Carlos Water, where frigates HMS Ardent and HMS Antelope were sunk during the 1982 conflict.

At the 11th hour of the 11th day at home and abroad the men

and women of the Royal Navy gathered and paused to remember those who have fallen in armed conflicts past and present.

At naval locations around the UK, as well as in the Mediterranean, Atlantic, Far East and the Gulf, the message from the Naval Service was the same: "We will remember them."

At Navy Command HQ in

Portsmouth wreaths were laid at the permanent memorial on Whale Island, while in the city centre thousands of people honoured the fallen at Portsmouth's Remembrance Service.

In Scotland 45 Cdo Royal Marines gathered in the Woodlands Garden at RM Condor with families and friends, while 1,000 trained staff and

recruits gathered on the parade ground at Lymington for the Commando Training Centre RM ceremony.

A similar ceremony was staged at RN Air Station Yeovilton in Somerset, where RN personnel were augmented by members of the Army's Wildcat Attack Helicopter fielding team.

During the service at St Bartholomew's Church – the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church – the Roll of Honour was read by WO1 Gary Smart, which included the names of all personnel on the active list of the Naval Service who had lost their lives since November 2012 – 14 members of the RN and four Royal Marines died in the past 12 months.

At HMS Raleigh in Cornwall around 200 submariners attended the annual RN Submarine School Remembrance Service, held outside the school, where wreaths were laid at the statue of the 'Unknown Submariner'.

Members of all three Services were amongst the 450 people who congregated on the parade ground at HMS Sultan for the engineering training base's service, while near-neighbours HMS Collingwood held their ceremony around the training base's memorial stone.

Further south, off the Channel coast, the company of HMS Duncan stopped their sea trials to pay respect, while sister Type 45 destroyer HMS Dragon, in the Mediterranean, held a service on

the flight deck before members of her company went ashore in Malta to attend a service in the island's capital, Valletta.

East of Suez, HM Ships Bulwark, Illustrious and Montrose and RFA Fort Austin – all part of the Cougar 13 deployment – held services.

Patrolling the northern reaches of the Gulf, Montrose paid her respects to all those who paid the ultimate sacrifice by heaving to at the position where, during Operation Telic in March 2003, two Sea Kings from 849 Naval Air Squadron collided and crashed into the sea during operations in Iraq, killing all seven aircrew.

Further afield, in the Caribbean and in South Africa, HMS Lancaster and HMS Richmond both held services.

The sailors of Lancaster took the time to mark out a poppy on the flight deck, with three sailors and two commandos creating the stalk, seven sailors the black stamen, and 144 shipmates with circular red card fixed to

their caps (painstakingly cut out the night before by ship's photographer LA(Phot) Jay Allen) reproducing the poppy's distinctive red petals as the frigate sailed between St Vincent and the Dominican Republic.

On the other side of the world, off the coast of Malaysia, destroyer HMS Daring laid a wreath near the place where HMS Repulse and HMS Prince of Wales were sunk during World War 2.

In the Gulf, sailors from the RN minehunter force helped tidy up a cemetery in Bahrain ready for remembrance ceremonies.

The 20 sailors from HM Ships Quorn, Atherstone, Ramsey and Shoreham were asked to help tidy up the Old Christian Cemetery, which contains the graves of British Servicemen from various campaigns.

Atherstone also hosted three Chelsea Pensioners who were visiting Bahrain in order to promote Remembrance Day to British families living away from home.

● Senior rates pause for reflection on board HMS Montrose in the Gulf
Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Knott



Picture: Dave Sherfield



● (Above) Raleigh personnel lay crosses on the War Graves at Horson cemetery in Torpoint; (right) Members of 43 Cdo Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines at the Spean Bridge Memorial where they were joined by veterans, Army colleagues, cadets, several hundred members of the public and a contingent of serving and former Dutch Marines

● (Right) AB Chris Cowan from HMS Hurworth pipes the still to signify the start of the minute's silence at the Portsmouth Naval Memorial; (left) RN divers from the Northern Diving Group, based at Faslane, mark Remembrance Week by replacing the White Ensign on the wreck of HMS Royal Oak in Scapa Flow, sunk in the first weeks of World War 2



Picture: LA(Phot) Ian Simpson



Picture: PO(Phot) Nick Tryon

● HMS Lancaster's unique poppy
Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen



Bringing heroes back to life

THEY don't like it up 'em.

Aidan 'Chippy' Wood demonstrates the art of using a World War 1-era rifle as he explains the often forgotten role of the Royal Navy's sailor-soldiers to personnel at RNAS Culdrose.

By day, Aidan is the Cornish air station's health and safety advisor. By night and weekends, he's an avid historian of the Great War and in particular the role of the Royal Naval Division.

With Great War centenary commemorations beginning next August – and running until November 2018 – Aidan's hoping to raise awareness of the division's deeds during four bitter years of war.

The division was formed on the outbreak of war when the newly-mobilised Royal Navy found it had too many men and too few duties for them.

The unused sailors were formed into battalions, joined Royal Marines Light Infantry and Royal Marines Artillery and thus was formed the Royal Naval Division.

After barely six weeks of rudimentary training, the division was thrown into action in Belgium to hold the crucial port of Antwerp.

"Their baptism of fire was at Antwerp in Belgium when they were thrown into the thick of it," said Aidan. "The Germans had underestimated the tenacity of the small Belgian Army who had fought continuously for over eight weeks, dislocating the German battle plan."

"This under-strength and under-trained unit supported the beleaguered Belgian Army,



Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Herron, RNAS Culdrose

managing to hold a superior trained force that was taken by surprise at the fighting spirit of the Naval Division.

"In some ways they didn't stand a chance, but they influenced the early stages of WW1, allowing the British and French allies time to reorganise and eventually hold the Germans along the Western Front; where the war stagnated for the next four years."

The sailors' battle at Antwerp only lasted a few days. When

they pulled out of the Belgian port, 196 sailors had been killed or wounded, 936 were captured and made prisoners of war and almost 1,500 crossed the border into Holland and were interned for the rest of the War by the neutral Dutch.

The division re-grouped, re-formed and was eventually transferred to the eastern Mediterranean taking part in the disastrous Gallipoli campaign – one of two landmark naval commemorations as part of

WW1 100 events (the other is the clash of dreadnoughts at Jutland) – then returned to the Western Front.

In his first presentation to Culdrose personnel, Aidan donned the replica uniform of a Petty Officer in the Anson battalion and described how the division fought and lived day to day.

"This is a great passion of mine. I've three great uncles who fought in WW1 – and survived," he explained.

"In my spare time I've been researching WW1 for the past 28 years, the last six specifically on the Royal Naval Division and how they fought through the war."

"They were always seen as different from the rest of the Army and although in 1916 they were subsumed into the Army to become the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division, they were the only Army formation to wear both Navy and Army badges of rank."

Meanwhile, the deeds of more than 40 Naval heroes will be set in stone on the streets they once walked as part of commemorations of the 100th anniversary of the Great War.

Specially-commissioned paving stones will be laid across the land for more than 400 Servicemen decorated with the Victoria Cross for their actions in the face of the enemy.

Forty-four members of the Royal Navy were awarded Britain's highest military decoration between 1914 and 1918, from Cdr Henry Ritchie – who led a raid on Dar es Saalam, in then German East Africa – to Lt Harold Auten, who engaged a U-boat in the Channel in a crippled disguised merchantman (known as a Q-Ship).

Communities Secretary Eric Pickles and VC winner L/Sgt Johnson Beharry, the first living recipient of the decoration in more than 30 years, unveiled the design for the stones at London's Army and Navy Club.

"I get goose bumps just thinking of World War 1 and what the men and women went through," said L/Sgt Beharry.

"Now we are in armoured vehicles and it's tough. These are men on foot or on a horse, with bayonets, charging at the enemy."

More than 200 entries from artists, individuals and schoolchildren across Britain were received before judges – including L/Sgt Beharry, VC collector and philanthropist Lord Ashcroft and *Birdsong* author Sebastian Faulks – selected the design by Charlie MacKeith from London.

The winning design uses the material, form and lettering of memorials used by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and incorporates an electronic code which people can scan using smartphones to discover more information about the VC recipient.

The memorial stones will be laid in the centennial month that the recipient earned the medal.

The first Royal Navy recipient was Edinburger Cdr Ritchie in November 1914.

The first naval airman recognised was Reginald Warneford, who was born in Darjeeling, India, and educated in Stratford-upon-Avon; he destroyed a Zeppelin in flight over Belgium but was killed in a flying accident just ten days later in June 1915.

And the first Royal Marine VC winner of WW1 was the mortally-wounded Maj Francis Harvey from Sydenham in Kent. With his dying breath he ordered the magazine of HMS Lion flooded, thus preventing the battle-cruiser sharing the fate of her sisters at Jutland by blowing up.



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Deaths

Major General Pat Kay RM. Commissioned in the Royal Marines 1940. After serving in HMS Renown he joined 4 Cdo early 1944 and on D-Day was brigade liaison officer of 41 RM Cdo when his landing craft grounded 200 yards off Sword Beach. He managed to get off the beach and resisted a number of German counterattacks but by the end of the day the force had suffered 140 casualties. After reinforcements arrived he was ordered to attack an enemy stronghold at Petit Enfer; in the successful attack the Marines suffered no further losses, took 65 prisoners and a good deal of enemy weapons and equipment. In 1944 he was severely wounded when his Buffalo tracked landing vehicle hit a mine at Walcheren; he was appointed MBE (military). Post-war he served in Combined Operations HQ and attended the Army Staff College at Camberley. In 1954 he joined 40 Cdo in Malta and was deployed to Cyprus during the EOKA Emergency; two years later he took part in the Suez landings. Instructor at the Joint Services Amphibious Warfare Centre at Poole. As a newly-promoted Lieutenant Colonel he commanded 43 RM Cdo then worked at Whitehall: Director of Naval Security 1974-81 and in 1982 associate secretary of the Defence Press

Ask Jack

Martin ‘Doc’ ‘Dolly’ Dalton MEM(M) 1st Class: Following Martin’s very recent death his wife Chris would like to locate any photos of him whilst serving in the RN 1977-86 in HM Ships Tiger and Fearless, also various establishments including Raleigh, Sultan, Neptune, Dolphin and Nelson, particularly Rooke (Gibraltar) Feb 1981-Feb 82. Portsmouth, Faslane and Helensburgh. Ex-shipmates his wife remembers are ‘Ticker’ Whitaker (Skelton), George ‘Rocky’ Rock (Middlesbrough) and ‘Wingnut’ onboard HMS Fearless. He also played football and athletics. Contact Chris at chrisdalton2003@hotmail.com or tel: 0790 6230580.

South Atlantic Medal: I have been given a South Atlantic medal which was found on a rubbish tip in Darlington, Co Durham. The details around the edge are ‘S [S] M.A.Crowley D190335M. HMS Invincible’. I would like to return this to the owner if anyone knows of this person. Contact Mike Dunne at 55 Alwyn Road, Darlington, Co. Durham DL3 0AH or tel: 01325 258193.

Seeking D P Thomson: Mr R T Jordan is seeking his oppo, D P Thomson, with whom he was in HMS Afrikaner. He would like a few yarns with him, although he is in his 91st year. Contact Mr Jordan, 40 Crusader Court, Keyes Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 5EG.

Pusher Motor Cutter: Does anyone know where I might beg, borrow, or even buy an ex-pusher motor cutter, the clinker-built type with the Enfield H02 engine as fitted to the Leander-class frigates etc? It would need to have a sound hull and ideally, still have the Enfield motor. I’m trying to arrange a charity fundraising event centred on just such a boat, so I can maintain the Navy link. Any information on where there might be one or how/where they were disposed of would be useful. Contact Bob Dixon at j.dixon966@btinternet.com

Marine Reg Batt: My uncle, Mne Reg Batt, served in the Royal Marines 1941-1953 and sadly passed away before I knew him. Do you remember Reg Batt? I know that he served in HM Ships Belfast, Glasgow and Vanguard during that time, but I would love to find out more about him, where he served, what ships he served in etc. If you can help, please contact Sharon Gibbings at Sharon.gibbings213@mod.uk or write to: 9 Annabel Court, Dene Road, Andover, Hampshire SP10 2FR.

Words from a poem: Joan Cole can only remember a line of a poem – “and here lies the girl that loved a sailor” – and would like to know the remainder. If anyone can send her the words please write to: Mrs Joan Cole, Chestfield House, The Ridgeway,

Swap Draft

AB(CIS)1 Maher wanting to swap for any shore-based draft/ship in refit – current assignment is HMS Portland, deploying on APT South in Jan 14, contact [HMSPTLD-WE-CIS SysSM AB10\(Maher\).JH@](mailto:HMSPTLD-WE-CIS SysSM AB10(Maher).JH@)

Talking Navy News goes digital

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

and Broadcasting Committee, assisting the full-time D-Notice Secretary. Succeeding to the principal appointment in 1986 he had to deal with several contentious matters including Northern Ireland and the sinking of the Belgrano. September 19. Aged 92.

George Adams. Served HMS Cheviot 1958 and a member of the association. September 24.

Royal Naval Association

Douglas ‘Dougie’ Charles Daynes Able Seaman. Served 1939-45 in HMS Duke of York. Norwich RNA. October 16. Aged 94.

Albert ‘Bert’ Edward Lovell A/B. Served in Rescue Tugs in WW2. Known as an accordionist, he had played on BBC radio and, being left-handed, played his accordion upside down. Worthing RNA, formerly of Brentford & Chiswick branch. July 31.

Reginald ‘Reg’ William Collins Ch.M(E). Served 1948-70 in HMS Triumph, Minerva, Diamond, Leeds Castle, Narvik, Girdleness, Maidstone, Victorious, Naiaid and Hardy. Last active posting final voyage of HMS Belfast to London mooring, Cardigan & District RNA; welfare officer for 15 years. August 26. Aged 82.

Leslie Whitmore. Served HMS Royal

Chestfield, Whitstable, CT5 3JT.

HMS Ocean: Renny Hendriksen seeks anyone with whom he served on the 1945 commission of HMS Ocean. Please contact Renny at Flat 51, Hinchley Manor, Hinchley Wood, Surrey KT10 0AT.

Rowallan Division 1980-81, based at HMS Raleigh. I was the W02 Royal Marines and acted as the Sergeant Major for the division. The division assisted the RN in grooming failed candidates from the AIB. A rather severe 12-week character-building and development course was used to attempt to rectify this. There were about four batches trained during my stay and I assisted in recovering batch details by the ex-Training Officer and 2/c Admiral John Lippiett (Rtd) who is now CEO of the Mary Rose Trust. Our mission is to try and find as many of our ex-cadets and training team as possible for a reunion; date time and venue to be decided but some time in 2014 if possible (2014

Reunions

April 2014

Double Seven Reunion reunion will take place from April 24 to 28 at Mill Rythe, Hayling Island. The cost is £96 pp plus £4 pp insurance. Book direct with Katey Lansley (bookings/enquiries) on 023 9246 0044.

The Royal Naval Medical Branch & Sick Berth Staff Association annual reunion and AGM is on the weekend of April 25-26 at the Belstead Brook Park Hotel, Ipswich, Suffolk. Contact Brian Todd at bmtodd@btinternet.com or tel: 01255 554090 for full details.

May 2014

HMS Phoebe Association: Cruiser (C43) and frigate (F42) have their 18th annual reunion from May 2-5 at Daunceys Hotel, Weston-super-Mare. All ex-crew welcome to join in. Contact secretary Roy Pavely at r.pavely@ntlworld.com or tel: 01235 211501.

HMS Bulwark, Albion and Centaur: 2014 AGM/reunion at the Royal Clifton Hotel, Southport, from May 9-11. More than 100 already booked. Contact Denis Ashkam on 01226 771427. The association is open to anyone who served at any time on these light fleet carriers. Whilst their ‘home port’ is Pompey, next year’s AGM/ social is in Southport, and at Sheerness/ Chatham in November 2014 for centenary commemorations of the sinking of the fifth HMS Bulwark in 1914. We also sponsor Sea Cadets from affiliated units on training ships. Enquiries to Leigh Easton at ngsfo@tiscali.co.uk, see www.bulwarkassoc.co.uk or write to Glenmoary, Hayford Place, Cambusbarron, Stirling FK7 9JX.

HMS Coventry D118 Association reunion will take place May 24-25 at the GIs Association, Whale Island. Muster for church service at 1015 at the Still & West pub in Old Portsmouth, on Sunday. Details

Arthur, Raleigh, Pembroke, Ocean and Daedalus. Cheshunt branch. October 4. Aged 86.

Ronald Green. Army. Associate member Cheshunt branch. October 14. Aged 92.

Wilfred ‘Wilf’ White. Served HMS Bulolo. Founder member of Wigston & District branch. Long-time social secretary, also welfare officer. September 16.

Irene Rolfe. Associate member Wigston & District branch. September 14.

David Lawrence Jobling AB. Joined HMS Ganges and served 1955-67 in HMS Dundas, Dainty, Cavalier, Droxford, Loch Lomond and Llandaff. Committee member of Northallerton RNA. October 14. Aged 73.

William ‘Bill’ George Bright (HO). HMS Honeysuckle and Arctic convoy veteran (recently received Arctic Star). North Russia Club and Margate RNA. Sept 16. Aged 89.

Ralph Hill Signalman (T.O.) Comms branch. Served 1943-46 HMS Impregnable, Glenholt, Watchman, Golden Hind (Staff of Adm Fraser – BPF) and Tamar (Hong Kong). PRO for Bexhill branch since 2009. October 25. Aged 89.

Edmund ‘Ted’ James Hooper PO(ME). Served in carriers including Superb, Glory and Illustrious, and in Korean War. Member

also being the 350th RM Corps birthday, so part of my personal celebration plan for next year). Admiral Lippiett will be assisting in recovering info from historical records, but can be contacted through me in the first instance. I retired as a WO1 (RSM) from 40 Commando RM in July 1985. Contact David Langley at paulineatnewbuild@live.co.uk or tel: 01625 824942.

809 NAS: I am a retired RAF navigator, and had a three-year loan service flying the Buccaneer S2 with the FAA at Lossiemouth and on HMS Hermes in 1966 to 1968, serving with 809 NAS and subsequently 736 NAS until 1969. I am trying to make contact with these three former RN 809 NAS officers with whom I served over the period October 1966 to May 1968 – Lt D Anning (AE)(M), Lt Cdr P H Cummuskey (X) (O) and Lt Cdr T M Willis (X)(F). Contact Norman Roberson at nroberson@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 01572 724567.

can be found on www.hmscoventry.co.uk/reunion.php or contact Chris Howe on 07786 156763.

Royal Naval Engineerroom Association 22nd annual reunion on May 16-17 at the Nautical Club, Bishopsgate St, Birmingham B15 1ET. New members welcome. Details from Bob Styants at bob.styants@btinternet.com or tel: 0121 422 4115.

Promotions & Assignments

Cdre P A McAlpine ADC to be Commander Portsmouth Flotilla with effect from March 18 2014.

Cdre N L Brown ADC to the Cabinet Office for temporary secondment with effect from Nov 12 2013.

Col P S Cameron to be promoted Acting Brigadier and to be Commodore Naval Staff from November 12 2013 until May 9 2014.

Capt M P Briers to be Team Leader Sustainable Engineering Manning Programme within Navy Command HQ with effect from December 2013.

Capt H Duffy to be Captain BRNC Dartmouth with effect from February 12 2014.

Capt S J Pearson to be Captain Surface Ships (Portsmouth) with effect from February 4 2014.

Capt S P Porter to be Senior Military Adviser (Maritime) within the DSTL with effect from February 3 2014.

Capt P Marshall to be Captain Engineering (Portsmouth) with effect from March 2014.

Capt N P Stanley to be Deputy UK NATO Military Representative with effect from January 21 2014.

Surg Capt (D) P F Culwick to be Assistant Head Personnel Strategy – Corps Services Personnel with effect from December 2013.

Cdr H K Ackland MVO to be promoted Captain and to be Assistant Head Plans within the Defence Support Chain Operations and Movements with effect from December 10 2013.

Cdr S P Huntington to be promoted Captain with effect from October 28 2013 and to be Chief of Staff Joint Force HQ with effect from December 9 2013.

Cdr C Wood to be promoted Captain and to be Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff J3 (Maritime) within PJHQ with effect from November 18 2013.

Cdr J C Thain-Smith to be promoted Acting Captain and to be Deputy ISAF Medical Adviser with effect from January 2014.

Lt Col J Marok RMR to be promoted Colonel and to be Royal Naval Reserve Captain Training with effect from October 8 2013.

Acting Capt A H Talbott to continue as Acting Captain and to be Head Stability Plans (Regional Command South West) Afghanistan with effect from January 2014.

Cdr P Laughton to be Commanding Officer of HMS Lancaster from November 22 2013.

Cdr Phillip Newell to be Commanding Officer of HMS Echo from December 2 2013.

Lt Cdr W R C King to be Commanding Officer of MCM1 Crew from February 10 2014.

Lt L G Bell to be Commanding Officer of HMS Example from November 4 2013.

of Swaffham branch. October 1. Aged 82.

Tom Grimes, Artificer. Joined HMS Mercury as a boy. Ships include HMS Sheffield, Corunna and Defender. Member of Mercury Old Boy’s Association. Aged 84.

Ivor Pescaglino, Chief A/E FAA. Served 1948-70. RNAS St. Merryn, Culdrose, Ford, Halfar, Arbroath, Stretton, Lossiemouth, Brawdy, HMS Eagle, HMS Ark Royal. October 14. Aged 82.

Clifford ‘Sam’ Thomas Sawdon CPO OEM. Served 1954-78 in HM Ships Scott (55), Hermes (59), Hampshire (63), Rothesay (64), Yarmton (68) and Eagle (70). October 19. Aged 74.

Submariners Association

C ‘Cyril’ Bowden, St01. Submarine service: 1943-46. Served in: Virtue. North Staffs Branch. Aged 90.

P E ‘Peter’ Dollamore, CPO Rel. Submarine service: 1953-61. Served in: Anchorite, Acheron, Aeneas, Token, Truncheon. Gosport Branch. Aged 89.

G L ‘Gordon’ Grosse, PO El. Submarine service: 1958-67. Served in: Scotsman (58-61) Sealion (61-64) Orpheus (66-67). Dolphin Branch. Aged 76.

J R ‘Jack’ Roberts, Bronze X. PO.Tel. Submarine service: 1943-46. Served in: L26 Truant O19 Trenchant. Australia Branch. Aged 92.

R ‘Ramsay’ Harrison, LTO. Submarine service: 1943-47. Served in: H50 H51 Auriga. Merseyside Branch. Aged 90.

Algerines Association

John C Brown L/Ck. Rattlesnake, Hound. October 10. Aged 80.

Ron Sykes Stwd. Nerissa. October 15. Aged 87.

George Maggs AB. Postillion. October 24. Aged 95.

Fleet Air Arm Association

Dave (Spike) Hughes CAF(AE). Served 1945-68 in HMS Blackcap, Implacable (804, 812), Daedalus, Ocean, Sanderling (1830), Peregrine, Blackcap, Gamecock, Fulmar (736, 784, 803), Osprey, Gurkha (829) and Ark Royal (803). One of the earliest members of Ford branch. Oct 27. Aged 86.

HMS Saintes Association

Cdr Mike Porter. 1955-56 Navigation Officer 1960-62 Captain.

Ray Hayball AB. 1958-60.

Arthur Howe AB. 1955-56.

John Grice AB. 1955-56.

James Jones ME1. 1955-56.

Derek Blount ME1. 1951-53.

Sports lottery

Oct 12: £5,000 – Cpl R McLauchlan; £1,500 – AB M G Aitken; £500 – LH D Cracknell.

Oct 19: £5,000 – AB J C Howell; £1,500 – PO A M Sharp; £500 – PO L P Chambers.

Oct 26: £5,000 – Lt D Waskett; £1,500 – PO A Wilson; £500 – Mne D McKechnie.

Nov 2: £5,000 – AB R Green; £1,500 – AB A Howlett; £500 – AB W Cullingham.

Memorial service for Admiral Hunt

A MEMORIAL service, in the form of a Service of Thanksgiving, will take place in Guildford Cathedral at 1400 on Wednesday January 8 2014 for the late Admiral Sir Nicholas John Streytnsham Hunt, who died on October 25 2013 aged 82.

Admiral Hunt was born on November 7 1930 and entered BRNC at Dartmouth in May 1944.

As a Midshipman and junior officer, he served in battleship HMS Vanguard, corvette Oakham Castle and cruiser Superb.

From 1957-59 he commanded minesweeper Burnaston, moving on to become assistant Private Secretary to Princess Marina from 1959-61. He accompanied Princess Alexandra as Aide-de-Camp when she represented the Queen at the Nigerian independence ceremonies, for which he was appointed MVO (later LVO).

He then enjoyed an unusually long period in command, first of frigate Palliser and, on promotion to Commander in 1963, of frigate Troubridge. In 1969 he commanded Ark Royal whilst she was in refit, later becoming her Executive Officer.

There followed appointments to the Directorate of Public Relations (Navy) and Director of Defence Policy (Naval) Sea Division, following which he became a student at the Royal College of Defence Studies, leaving early to take command of Intrepid.

He served as Director of Navy Plans 1976-78 and

was appointed Captain BRNC in October 1978.

On promotion to Rear Admiral he was Flag Officer Second Flotilla between 1980 and 1981, Director General Naval Manpower and Training from 1981 to 1983 and, as a Vice-Admiral, was Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland 1983-85.

In 1985 he was promoted to Admiral and appointed Commander-in-Chief Fleet and Allied Commander-in-Chief Channel and Eastern Atlantic.

Admiral Hunt held several honorary titles having been appointed Rear Admiral of the UK (1994-97), then Vice Admiral of the UK, and finally Lieutenant of the Admiralty, the personal representative of the Queen in her capacity as Lord High Admiral.

He was appointed KCB in 1985 and advanced to GCB on his retirement two years later.

On completing active service in the Royal Navy, Admiral Hunt’s work included leading the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust; Deputy Managing Director at Eurotunnel; Commissioner of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission; Director General of the UK Chamber of Shipping; Chairman of the South-West Surrey District Health Authority and Chairman of Nuffield Hospitals, from which position he retired in 2001.

Admiral Hunt is survived by Lady (Meriel) Hunt, whom he married in 1966, a daughter and two sons, one of whom is Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt.

Entries for the Deaths column and Swap Drafts in January’s Noticeboard must be received by December 4

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

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■ Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.



The life and times of a chockhead

YOU do not have to turn to the thoughts of the great and the good to get a feel for an organisation.

Indeed, the 'official' view from the top is sometimes quite different from that of the professionals at the coalface.

So while you will not learn anything new about Naval strategy or Cold War politics from Billy Korth's book, you will get a sense of the reality of life in the Mob, as well as a glimpse into the fun to be had at the time.

The Mechanical Handler (Estuary Press, £7.99+P&P in paperback from lulu.com, ISBN 978-1-291-50556-6) is a slim volume, and takes the simple form of a chronological romp through Korth's 25-year career, peppered with anecdotes, vignettes and observations.

Korth was a chockhead – an aircraft handler – and his book combines both the image of the big yellow machines used to marshal aircraft on a flight deck (mechanical handlers), and the 'rude mechanicals' as exemplified by the well-meaning artisans Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The Navy of the early 1960s had different approaches compared to that of today, and many of Korth's observations amplify that.

An early spell on HMS Ark Royal in 1965-66 saw Korth in charge of a PD150 – a large fire extinguisher on wheels – when a Supermarine Scimitar fighter was forced to land with an undercarriage problem.

At the sound of metal hitting deck Korth duly ran out with the extinguisher – only to be hauled back by a senior colleague as one of the jet's wheels flashed past and bounced into the sea.

Another striking image is of 'suitman' Buck J: "He had this habit of smoking whilst wearing his farnought suit. It looked quite a sight, as the smoke was coming out of the little air holes in his asbestos helmet."

Korth saw service in the Far East, Africa (where his participation in a rugby match ended when he was carted off to hospital with malaria) and the Falklands, but some of the outstanding elements of Korth's book are the skylarking and general mischief that prevailed.

A game of deck hockey – aka death hockey – on board HMS Eagle saw the puck go into the side nets – and the man sent to retrieve it ("Trapper") went into the Indian Ocean, prompting a search and rescue operation.

The same man's response to the craft of two brothers on board verged on the brutal – they had spent months building a model of HMS Victory using balsa, which was blown to smithereens by Trapper's firecrackers as they walked into the mess.

Trapper represents an old-style Jack who would find today's Navy a challenging environment: "Trapper always had the same routine when he was shaken. You would hear the click of the bunk light gong on.

"Another click as the can spanner hit the top of the beer can.

"The hiss of the beer can opening, then the sound of the match striking, and finally a wracking cough as he dragged on the first cig of the day."

Curate's egg of the deep

THE GROVE REVIEW

WHILE waiting to appear on *BBC Breakfast* in Salford recently, I was surprised to see a short programme about a new book entitled **Empire of the Deep: The Rise and Fall Of the British Navy** (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, £25 ISBN 978-0-2978-64080) by one Ben Wilson.

Despite over 40 years working in the field of Naval and maritime history, this author was new to me. I had never met him at any conference; he had never contacted me for advice. He seemed a personable enough character and, if the dust jacket comments are to be believed, he is an author of considerable ability, writes Prof Eric Grove of *Liverpool Hope University*.

The book is indeed a very good read. The author has a great talent for narrative and his account of English naval history up to Trafalgar is gripping and, at times, even stimulating.

The chapter on the activities of English ships in the Mediterranean, countering Barbary pirates in the late 17th Century, is especially useful in an era when maritime security tasks are being stressed as they are today.

It would be interesting, however, to hear specialists' views, but the account of these earlier periods seems to me to be sound enough. The author rightly expresses his debt to Nicholas Rodger for keeping him more or less on the straight and narrow.

The repetition without comment, however, of the old story about Nelson's use of the telescope on his blind eye at Trafalgar did however, demonstrate a disturbing tendency to sacrifice historical debate to telling a good story.

I then began to reflect on the balance of the book. Here we were in 1805 and 457 pages were under my left thumb. Less than 200 pages were left for the more recent periods that have been far from uneventful.

Sadly, the quality of the book rapidly declined. It would have been much better for the author's reputation had he stopped in 1805, or perhaps 1815, with a book on 'The Rise of the British Navy'. Perhaps his publishers wanted something more 'sexy' and saleable. The result is a deeply-flawed book.

Prof Andrew Lambert, to whom the author pays generous tribute, keeps Mr Wilson more or less on the straight and narrow for the beginning and middle of the 19th Century, but the author misses the real nature of what happened at the end of the 1880s. The redefinition of 'battleship' and 'cruiser' which occurred then passes the author by – not too surprising given his clear unfamiliarity with original sources. This also demonstrates the problem of the promiscuous use of terms such as 'battleship', before they were officially adopted.

The next section of the book concentrates too much on Fisher and takes at face value some of the more lurid criticisms of the Navy at the turn of the century. The true nature of the Royal Navy's problems – too much science and technology, not too little – is not recognised. There is serious confusion on important questions of fire control and Fleet redeployment and to claim that "electronic warfare had arrived" with Dreadnought demonstrates a technical ignorance that is quite remarkable.

There are other errors. The Home Fleet (whose origins the author does not cover) did not have 14 battle-cruisers in 1914.

And so it goes on into World War 1. The author is right to point out the baleful results of Jutland – a sign of a welcome

tendency to tell the previous story 'warts and all' – but he ignores the role of Senior Warrant Officer Alexander Grant in saving HMS Lion and the true reason for the execrable gunnery of the battle cruisers' lack of practice. He also cannot resist falling into the comforting lie that the German Fleet never came out seeking battle again.

His description of the next sortie by Admiral Scheer is just plain wrong. The High Sea Fleet did not turn back when the Harwich Force was sighted. It turned to engage and finish off the misreported battle-cruisers.

Scheer only turned for home when it was clear he was facing the full Grand Fleet, something he always knew he could never defeat at full strength.

The author continues to tell the rest of the story through episodic case studies and his technical knowledge continues to let him down. HMS Hermes was not the first carrier

with an island superstructure – that was HMS Eagle. And HMS Ark Royal – which is used as the basis of the account of the early part of World War 2 – did not have armoured hangars.

His criticisms of the inability of British carriers to counter hostile air forces would also have been better made if the author had gone deeper into the absolutely key question of radar fighter control.

The discussion of the defence of shipping in the Atlantic in World War 2 pays no heed to the important work that has vindicated the Royal Navy's inter-war development of anti-submarine warfare; the erroneous explanation of the origin of the term 'ASDIC' is par for the course.

Using Capt Walker –



distinguished though he was – to tell the story of the Battle of the Atlantic is distorting to say the least. RN anti-submarine warfare was not as ineffective in the early years of the war as the book says and the success in driving the U-boats from the Atlantic in 1941 is ignored.

The author is on stronger ground, however, in his firm assertion that the invasion threat in 1940 was countered primarily by the Navy and that the Germans would indeed have been 'blasted out of the water' if they had tried.

If the 1945 and after finale to the book had been presented to me as a dissertation it would have struggled to pass. Discussion of post-war defence policy is superficial at best and errors continue to proliferate. The RAF island bases that were to replace the carriers in the first phase of the Healey Review were not for V bombers; the Royal Marines were not to be disbanded in the 1981 Nott Review.

At the end the author offers some interesting, if overly negative, conclusions on the current state of Britain's maritime situation and the salutary and useful comment that Britain must retain naval strength sufficient for a sea dependant island nation.

This sound conclusion would, however, have carried greater weight if it had been based on a stronger foundations.

The bibliography demonstrates the paucity of the author's research for a book of this scale. Much vital material is ignored. One suspects that the last part may have been tagged on at great speed; it reads rather like a piece of work whose author suddenly discovered that the due date was next week.

The best I can say is that it is well worth reading up to the end of Chapter 43 – that is up to 1860. Specialists in more modern naval history may use the rest of the 649-page account to spot the gaps and errors.



Naval swords still have a point

AS A fighting weapon, the sword has been out of favour in naval warfare for more than a century.

Yet it remains a key feature in Royal Navy life – if not on a daily basis, then at least on important ceremonial occasions.

Its role past and present, as well as the accompanying social history of swords in the Senior Service is told in the exhaustively-researched **British Naval Swords and Swordsmanship** (Seaforth, £25 ISBN 978-1-84832-1359) by Capt John McGrath and Cdr Mark Barton.

Not only is the depth of knowledge shown in this 144-page tome impressive, but the book is extremely copiously illustrated in black and white and colour – not just with photographs of swords, and parts thereof, but paintings, sketches, newspaper cuttings, even a Bruce Bairnsfather cartoon.

The sword hasn't been used in naval action since the Boxer Uprising in China and the Boer War.

There are stories – almost certainly apocryphal – of cutlasses being wielded during the boarding of the Altmark (1940), a raid on a German schooner (1944) and possibly even as late as the early 50s in the Middle East.

These days the naval sword is a ceremonial adornment – (de) commissionings, parades and the like – but is not required at courts martial; the practice of pointing a sword towards an officer found guilty was abolished a decade ago.

Buying one with all the accompanying trappings such as case and scabbard will set you back about £1,000 brand new, so there's a very handy chapter on caring for your blade.

Also handy is an appendix listing the Wilkinson (now Firmin) Sword of Peace winners. More than 40 times in its 50-year history, the sword has been presented to a Royal Navy or Royal Fleet Auxiliary unit for life-saving or peacekeeping efforts, underlining the humanity which dominates the Naval Service.

And while today the sword is no longer a combat weapon, RN swordsmanship does continue to thrive in one field to this day: fencing.

The Navy are current Inter-Service champions, and the authors – both accomplished fencers – provide a useful potted history of the sport under the White Ensign.

There were few, if any, greater Naval fencers than Royal Marine Bob Anderson, Olympian, Olympic coach, and fight choreographer for many legendary big screen tales of swash and buckle – *Pirates of the Caribbean*, Zorro films, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

And while David Prowse strutted around in his black suit as Darth Vader, it was Bob Anderson who lunged and thrust with his light sabre during duels with Alec Guinness – duels recreated with two generations of youngsters ever since...

Global hunt for 'disruptive' raiders

JUST as the trench warfare of 1915-1917 and the horrors of the Somme and Passchendaele eclipse the 'war of movement' in 1914 and 1918, the common view of the Great War at sea – from the British viewpoint – is of boredom and inactivity, apart from the titanic clash of dreadnoughts at Jutland in May 1916.

Yet the opening months of WW1 on the Seven Seas were every bit as dramatic as any period in the Royal Navy's recent history – and certainly much more lively.

To be sure, there wasn't the 20th-Century Trafalgar the British public longed for, but there was a 12-month global chase by the RN – and Allied navies – to hunt down what Nick Hewitt calls **The Kaiser's Pirates** (Pen and Sword, £25 ISBN 978-1848-847736) in a stirring account of efforts to eliminate German warships beyond the waters of the Fatherland when war broke out in August 1914.

Because of our fixation on the North Sea and Western Front, it's easy to forget that World War 1 was indeed that – a global conflict. As a new nation, Germany was a latecomer to the age of empires but still had a fair smattering of overseas territories by 1914 and, like other powers, a decent overseas flotilla to protect them.

Indeed, when war began there was one battle-cruiser, plus more than half a dozen armoured and light cruisers under the Kriegsmarine scattered around the world, the most famous of which was von Spee and his East Asia Squadron, routing an inferior Royal Navy force at Coronel, before succumbing to a vastly superior battle-cruiser squadron off the Falklands.

Von Spee wasn't the only German warship captain to lead the Allies a merry dance. The

story of the Emden, which wreaked havoc in the Far East and Pacific until HMAS Sydney finally caught her, is well known.

Less well-known is the light cruiser SMS Karlsruhe, which did the same for a couple of months around the Caribbean and western Atlantic in a cruiser not too dissimilar from the pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee in 1939; captured sailors from the merchant ships she intercepted were held aboard her accompanying collier, rather like the Altmark.

The Royal Navy never did catch up with the Karlsruhe. As it began massing forces to put an end to her raiding, the cruiser mysteriously blew up – an internal explosion probably triggered by one of her magazines, vaporising her bow and killing two thirds of her crew. Her ten-week cruise had accounted for nearly 80,000 tonnes of shipping – far more than the famous Emden.

Hewitt tells the stories of the demise of the German ships mostly, though not exclusively, through the words of British sailors chasing them – hence the book's subtitle: 'Hunting Germany's Raiding Cruisers 1914-1915' – and makes good use of first-hand accounts left with the Imperial War Museum by those who were there.

Every one of the Kaiser's pirates was eventually hunted down – as Churchill so eloquently said of von Spee "He was a cut flower in a vase, fair to see yet bound to die."

With the exception of the escape of the Goeben and Breslau, whose arrival in Turkey was a key factor in the Ottoman Empire siding with the Central Powers, the German raiders played little role in the outcome of the Great War.

Their impact was disruptive more than decisive – they sank 280,000 tonnes of shipping (U-boats dispatched three times that



● German cruiser Emden showing the scars of battle following her fatal encounter with HMAS Sydney

amount in one month alone, February 1917).

They did tie down an inordinate amount of Allied naval power, von Spee especially, but above all, Hewitt argues, they gave the German Navy its first heroes – men and deeds to inspire future generations of sailors.

"Navies need more than just ships and men – they need legends and heroes – no service knew this better than the Royal Navy," the author writes.

Many of the names of the raiders – von Spee, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Emden, Königsberg – were used a generation later and often proved to be just as much of a thorn in the Allies' sides under the *Reichskriegsflagge* as their predecessors in the High Sea Fleet.

Buxton unit is far from coasting

BUXTON Sea Cadets proved that a coastal location is not a prerequisite for success in sailing competitions.

Of the 60 Sea Cadet units in the North West Area, Buxton is the furthest from the sea.

But it still managed to prove to be the top sailing unit by providing six of the 13-strong area team for the National Sailing Regatta at Southport.

And they didn't just go to take part – they proved more than capable against the best of the other areas, and helped North West take the overall trophy for the first time since 1991.

The Buxton cadets who participated were Matthew Naden, Mary Strutt, Jamie Coley and Sophia Palfreyman in the Bosun class, Aaron Naden in the Pico class and Chloe Fisher in the Topper class.

There is also cause for optimism on the home front for Buxton, as additional space created by their new drill hall has enabled them to increase the number of cadets – there are now almost 50 on the unit's books, and adult volunteers who would like to help with training, administration or fundraising are asked to contact the Commanding Officer, Lt (SCC) Bruce Luckman RNR, at luckmanb@aol.com

Hat-trick for Nottingham

NOTTINGHAM unit cadets came back from the National Combined Regatta at the ExCeL having achieved a hat-trick.

Rowing boat handlers from the Midlands unit won their section of the competition, the largest such event in the Corps calendar.

That means they have taken gold for the third year in a row – they had already notched their tenth win in a row at the Area finals to qualify for the national event in London's Docklands.

Following on from previous years' successes in boat handling, Commanding Officer Adam Crump said: "We are incredibly pleased that Nottingham have won this trophy again – they are a credit to the unit and to the whole of Eastern Area."

Cadets from the unit were on duty in the centre of Nottingham for the launch of the Poppy Appeal for this year, while others helped ensure an evening event at Hucknall Royal British Legion went smoothly, welcoming guests to the building.

Sandcastles yield cash

SEA Cadets and their Army counterparts gathered at New Romney and District unit's headquarters, TS Veteran, to present cheques to representatives of the Littlestone Lifeboat Station.

The funds were raised by the cadets from sponsorship for the RNLi's annual Sandcastle Challenge to local youth organisations – to build as many sandcastles as they can in one hour.

This year's winners were the Army Cadets, having built an amazing 1,257 castles, while the Sea Cadets managed 1,047.

The total amount raised amounted to £334 – £150 from the Sea Cadets and £184 from the ACF.

Littlestone inshore lifeboat station is situated at Greatstone, near New Romney, in Kent.

Kettering strengthen Fleet Air Arm links

KETTERING unit strengthened their affiliations with the Fleet Air Arm by hosting Cdre Jock Alexander, Commanding Officer of RN Air Station Yeovilton, at their burgee efficiency award evening.

TS 800 NAS proudly bear the name of the last Fleet Air Arm fixed wing fighter squadron, which was decommissioned in 2011 – it was previously known as TS Pythley, after a Hunt-class destroyer that the people of

Kettering paid for during World War 2.

"We are unique among Sea Cadet units", said Lt (SCC) Marc Pether RMR, CO of Kettering.

"It's a great honour to be able to keep the squadron name alive."

"We aim to ensure that every cadet not only enjoys attending our unit and take part in all the various activities, but that they acquire lifelong practical skills to take them forward in life and a sense of self-discipline and pride in what they can achieve."

Kettering cadets are distinctive as the only ones with a Fleet Air Arm cap tally, and in addition to strong traditional ties with naval bases in Portsmouth and Plymouth can boast links to air stations at Yeovilton and Culdrose.

Amongst the usual activities of sailing and seamanship, they also take on airborne pursuits, and even look at air engineering aspects as well, on visits to the naval air stations.

"The cadets get the opportunity to fly on air

experience flights with 727 Naval Air Squadron at Yeovilton in the Grob trainers and we have been to RAF Shawbury where some flew with the Navy's basic training 705 NAS," said 1/O Chris Jablonski MN, First Lieutenant of the unit.

"It's all about engaging the kids in different activities and we offer more than most units here."

Presenting the unit with a prestigious burgee for the year, in recognition of continued development of the unit and cadets, Cdre Alexander was impressed by the facilities and friendly atmosphere.

"It's a real pleasure being here tonight to share with you and your parents the award of this burgee."

"There's real excitement in the Fleet Air Arm as we introduce a new generation of aircraft and with the arrival of the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers."

"I hope some of you will look into joining the Royal Navy, but more importantly that you see what the Navy can offer."

MSSC hold court

THE Marine Society Sea Cadets (MSSC) held its ninth Annual Court at Haberdashers' Hall in London, when members gathered to hear what the charity has achieved in the past year.

Members were treated to a special presentation by POC Kirsty-Niccole on what life is like as a Sea Cadet.

Awards were given to seafarers for significant personal and professional development through education whilst working at sea, and a 50 year Service Medal was awarded to CPO (SCC) Ray Gosling for his unwavering commitment to the Corps.



Marchers beat the weather

DESPITE heavy rain, Sea Cadets from across Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire met in October for a spectacular show of formal parading in Marlow to celebrate Trafalgar Day on behalf of the Royal Navy.

More than 200 young people participated, including the Shires Royal British Legion Youth Band and local Royal Marines Cadets detachments.

While the rain meant that an initial march from the Royal British Legion Club to All Saints Church had to be cancelled, the weather had thankfully improved enough during the service (pictured above) to allow them to march up the High Street, giving a formal salute to the Inspecting Officer, Cdr Graham Turnbull, the Chief of Staff, Naval Regional Command Eastern England.

Lt Nick Jones, Commanding Officer of Marlow unit, said: "All of the young people who took part today looked very smart and were a credit to their units."

"It is a big reflection of the hard work, dedication and passion of these young people that they can deliver such a show-stopping parade. We are really proud of them."

Richard Royall, chairman of trustees at the unit, added: "We are very grateful to the whole community for the support that we received in undertaking this parade."

"The Royal British Legion and two Rotary Clubs were particularly instrumental in ensuring the day was a success."



● Mr and Mrs Bryan Reid of The Garage, Ballygowan, with cadets from Bangor unit and their new Trinity 500 rowing boat. Mr and Mrs Reid nominated the cadets for an award from NISA's 'Making A Difference Locally' campaign, and the award went a long way to securing the purchase of the new boat and some of the associated safety equipment. The senior girls rowing team subsequently went on to win silver medals at the National Combined Regatta in London

Cadets front the Royal Marines Band

MEMBERS of the Bury St Edmunds unit band achieved an impressive first when they had the privilege of appearing on stage in front of the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Band at the Apex, Bury St Edmunds' main entertainment venue (right).

CO Sub Lt (SCC) Daniel Davis RNR said: "This is not only a first for TS St Edmund but for the town of Bury St Edmunds too."

"It was an outstanding weekend – the RM Band was superb. I do have to say the cadets really did themselves proud."

"The Apex is a 500-seat venue, and it's no mean feat to stand on that stage with so many people watching you as well as having the finest band in the world behind you."

Bandmaster Allen Townsend, who has been with the unit since 2006, said: "You watch these young people turn up to the unit and have a go at playing an instrument, none of them being able to read or play music, then you watch them on a stage like the Apex – it is unbelievable what they have achieved."

"Credit where credit is due, the cadets held their nerves and performed with real professionalism, bearing in mind they are aged between 13 and 17 years."

Unit management started planning for the concert in January, and funds raised were divided three ways – to support the unit's efforts to fund a new planned HQ, to raise money for the Corps' new sail training ship, and to support Help for Heroes.



Warsash invited to Whitehall



● Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel talks to JCdt Georgia Allen

SEA Cadets from Warsash unit were invited by the Royal Naval Association to march in their biennial Whitehall parade in September.

More than 40 cadets turned out under Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Tony Thurgood RNR, and were supported by applauding crowds who lined the street.

Following a short service of remembrance at the Cenotaph, the cadets posed for photographs in front of the Ministry of Defence Main Building, and many cadets and parents were introduced to the Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral David Steel.

Vice Admiral Steel said: "The cadets are so smart, well-mannered and happy – an absolute credit to Warsash Sea Cadet Unit."

The RNA were so impressed by the Warsash cadets that they have already been invited to march on the next such parade in two years' time.

S/M Brian Sandon, chairman of Netley RNA branch, thanked the Warsash cadets for their impressive turnout at the parade.

"The cadets looked very smart, and we were proud that the unit's standard was paraded alongside ours," said S/M Sandon.

The chairman of the Warsash unit management committee, Stephen Selmes, said: "All of the TS Tormentor team – cadets, staff and committee – were extremely proud to be asked to go to Whitehall and parade with the RNA."

"The cadets were fantastic – they were smart and marched very well indeed."



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Whitehaven stalwarts rewarded

TWO volunteer members of Whitehaven unit have been presented with long service medals by the Sea Cadet North West Area Officer, Cdr Mark Irwin.

CPO (SCC) Maureen McEuan (pictured above) was presented with a medal marking 12 years of service with the Corps.

As she received her award, Maureen was praised for her dedication and involvement with the unit.

"It seemed that every time I asked a question this evening, the cadets told me that Chief had done this or arranged that," said Cdr Irwin.

"It is clear that you're deeply involved and a key member of the unit" said Cdr Irwin.

He also presented the Captain's Medal for 50 years of service to the Sea Cadet Corps to Lt Cdr (SCC) Bill Hurst RNR (pictured below).

"This is a remarkable achievement which very few have managed," said Cdr Irwin.

"Bill Hurst started his Sea Cadet career as a cadet here at TS Bee and went on to become an adult member of staff.

"He has served this unit and the Corps with great dedication and distinction in a variety of roles, including a period as Commanding Officer and as Cumbria District Officer, and is currently Vice President."



Mess dinner for Guernsey

GUERNSEY unit remembered the Battle of Trafalgar in Navy style – and also celebrated its 30th year at the Old Government House Hotel.

Some 98 guests from Guernsey, Jersey and the UK joined the top table of Vice Admiral Fabian Malbon, Rear Admiral Nick Lambert, Cdre John Musters and CO Lt Paul Mooney (SCC) RMR at a mess dinner.

Grace, speeches and toasts made the evening entertaining, with the final toast to the immortal memory being followed with a reminder of TS Sarnia's 30th year – and the most successful in its history.

Special thanks go to Sue Mooney who, as always, made it all happen.



● LC Lizzie Lewis-Carthy, aged 17, of Sutton Coldfield unit, leads the massed bands of the Sea Cadet Corps during the Trafalgar Day Parade

A fine day for a Trafalgar parade

MORE than 500 cadets representing units across the country converged on the heart of London for this year's Trafalgar Day Parade.

This year's pageant, held the day before the 208th anniversary of Nelson's final battle, featured a spectacular display as well as precision drill.

In bright sunshine, instead of the expected rain, participating cadets were inspected by Naval Secretary Rear Admiral Jonathan Woodcock, including Tameside window ladder display.

The Reviewing Officer and

other senior officers worked their way along platoons representing Northern, Eastern, London and North Western Areas, as well as Alpha and X-Ray Coys of Royal Marines cadets and Army and Air cadets.

Families, friends, colleagues and tourists were treated to displays of hornpipe, club swinging, window ladder (Tameside's signature piece) and drill.

The National Massed Band of the Sea Cadets Corps completed the picture with a march down The Mall.



● (From top): Final adjustments before the ceremonies begin; Rear Admiral Jonathan Woodcock, Naval Secretary, inspects cadets on parade; the Tameside window display team in action

● (Left) Royal Marines Cadets on parade in London

Medal for Newport volunteer

JEFF Bowen, born and raised in Newport, received his Cadet Forces Medal from the Sea Cadet Association for his long service as a volunteer with Newport unit.

The medal was presented to CPO (SCC) Bowen during the unit's Royal Naval Parade and Inspection by Cdr Nigel Morton, the South West Area Officer.

The parade, held at the unit's headquarters, was attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Gwent, Simon Boyle, and the Deputy Mayor of the city, Cllr Trevor Watkins.

Mr Bowen, who had no former connections with the Royal Navy or the Sea Cadets, began volunteering with the unit in 1997 and achieved the rank of Petty Officer in 2007.

He was appointed Officer-in-Charge of the unit in 2003 and continued in this role until July 2010.

Although stepping down as Chief at Newport Sea Cadets, he has continued ever since as a Senior Instructor, and remains an active member of the unit.

By (Pearly) Royal invitation

SOUTHWARK unit was out in force to celebrate the harvest with the Pearly Kings and Queens of London, who were wearing their traditional pearl-button suits as they paraded from Guildhall to St Mary-le-Bow church.

Wearing dark suits that are covered in hundreds of bright mother-of-pearl buttons, the Pearly Kings and Queens of London are a charitable group dating back to the 19th Century.

At the festival, which celebrates the bounty of the autumn harvest, they started with traditional entertainment at London's Guildhall before marching past the Bank of England, Mansion House and through the centre of the City of London to St Mary-le-Bow for a service of thanksgiving.

The church is not only an impressive building, but is famous for being the crucial factor in deciding if a Londoner is a Cockney or not – if they are born within the sound of Bow Bells, they are a genuine Cockney.

Included in the event were marching bands, Maypole dancing, Morris dancers and even the Pandemonium Drummers, who appeared in the 2012 Olympics opening ceremony.

And of course there were donkeys and carts to carry the harvest.

Cadets from Southwark formed a joint platoon with personnel from HMS President, home of London's Royal Naval Reserve.

The tradition of the Pearly Kings and Queens was started in the 1870s by Henry Croft, an orphan who worked as a street sweeper in Somers Town, London.

Inspired by the costermongers, a close-knit group of market traders who sewed buttons onto their garments in order to recognise one another, Henry decided that he wanted to help the needy in the same way that the costermongers helped each other.

Knowing that he needed to stand out if he was to collect money for charity, Henry swept the street for buttons and gathered enough to cover his entire suit.

He became so popular and successful that he could not cope with the demands for his help and Pearly Families were formed.

Airmen don't err indoors

The RN Inter-Command indoor hockey competition suffered from the withdrawal of the Scotland men's and women's contingents, but still went ahead with the three women's teams (West, East and RM) playing each other twice.

Western region, Eastern Region, Naval Air Command and Royal Marines made up the four male sides in an 'all play all' competition, writes Lt Cdr Alan Walker.

Following on from the Royal Marines female bandies team at the Inter Command Outdoor last December, it was great to see those same women, led by Musns Amy Drinkwater, Kat and Alice Hudson – all members of the RN women's team – have now formed an indoor team.

Western Region Women – a sort of Plymouth/Naval Air combination – won the title. Portsmouth, sorry Eastern region, were second with the rapidly-improving Bandies getting better and better as the tournament progressed.

The Royal Marines men's team only had four – a pretty fearsome four for all that – led from the back by WO Jan Nicholas in goal and RM, RN and Combined Services Mne Craig Buchanan, recently back from Afghanistan with the award of the Military Cross.

It was no disgrace to the Portsmouth squad of five to be beaten 8-5 by four fired-up Royals. At one point the RM team only had two on the pitch and two sin-binned.

For his trouble Royal took third place, ahead of a not unreasonable Pompey side.

Naval Air, really well led by Adam Forsyth, won the men's competition, helped by several goals from transient Bangladeshi officer Lt Mehrabi, with Western Region (aka Plymouth) as runners up.

Ryan proves unbeatable

THE 2013 Combined Services individual squash championships were held at the recently-refurbished courts at Temeraire.

RN players entered the men's open, ladies, U25 and veterans' competitions and the audience was treated to exciting and skilful squash of the highest standard played in true sportsman-like fashion, with fine camaraderie between players from all three Services.

Two top Navy players – Lt Matt Ellicott and Mne Nick Jezeph – were unable to take part, but the RN still managed to provide the allocated numbers for the men's open competition.

Sadly, the Army had strength in depth and provided both finalists, with the top RN player sharing seventh position.

In the ladies competition the Army again dominated and achieved three out of the top four places.

It was a similar story in the veterans' event where S/Sgt Ray Burke won his seventh title in ten years.

In the U25 competition, there were only eight competitors, including newcomer Mne Ryan McKechnie (42 Cdo) and a previous winner L/Cpl Richard Jones (Army).

McKechnie breezed through to the final without dropping a game, but Jones was beaten in his semi-final by Burke's son James.

Another very good final to watch, but Burke was no match for McKechnie, who produced a master class to win 3-0 and become the only player in the entire tournament not to drop a game.

RO6 7s heaven

HMS Illustrious' rugby union team played their first game in seven months in a 7s clash against Salalah in Oman which served as a warm-up for both sides.

Salalah were gearing up for the Dubai 7s and wanted practice before the tournament, while HMS Illustrious' players needed some conditioning to get used to the heat – and also to prepare for their upcoming fixture against Muscat, writes LS(CIS) Nathan 'Bully' Bull.

The pitch was well looked after with soft ground and well-maintained grass – but it was a football pitch and so had no rugby posts.

The 20-strong Lusty team was split into two: AB(Sea) Dave 'Superstar' Vickers captained one, LS(CIS) Nathan 'Bully' Bull the second team (veterans).

The opener between Salalah and Lusty 1st VII began with the away team winning the toss and hoisting the ball high into the air. The sailors were on to Salalah quickly and a handling error led to the first try for the visitors.

That set the pattern of a well-fought game where the strength and determination from the Lusty boys came to bear; they scored several tries with only a few against in reply.

With the sound of the full-time whistle the teams had a short



● **LET(ME) Chris Hart tries to evade the Salalah defence**

Picture: CPO(AEA) Richie Crane

break before Lusty's 2nd VII took the field against the 1st VII.

This game had all the makings of a hard-hitter – and it didn't disappoint the dozen or so spectators. Tackles came thick and fast, including a slightly high tackle from one captain on the other (no quarter given...), but Lusty 1st were victorious thanks to good team work and communication.

Finally, Salalah took on Lusty 2nd, who were still recovering from their defeat – and it showed

with an early try to the home side.

This sparked a Lusty 2nd resurgence as they came back into the game and took the lead.

With the heat of the day still lingering in the evening, it was taking its toll on everyone – so much so that both sides made regular substitutions.

In the end Lusty 1st triumphed – two wins on the day, with one win and one defeat for the veterans and two defeats for the hosts.

Back-in-the-saddle RN seize trophy

THE Royal Navy were again triumphant at the annual military equestrian teamchase this year.

Inability to field a team last year due to operational commitments had allowed the RAF to step in and win the trophy from an absent RN.

A teamchase is a significantly dangerous event: four riders ride together around a gruelling cross-country course, jumping various challenging fixed fences.

Due to the nature of the event it takes a special horse and rider to compete. This year Lt Sharon Brown provided 50 per cent of the horsepower, riding her steed Gromit as lead horse as she did in 2011, and providing her horse Timba to Lt Richard Walker.

The rest of the team was Lt Cdr Vicky Sollitt, riding Prim, and CPO Mark Shaw riding his new mount.

The team met at the event in the Cotswolds near Cheltenham, with Richard and Mark travelling up from Culdrose and Sharon bringing her two horses from Portsmouth; Vicky was more local in Gloucestershire, but with two children and a dog

to organise, it wasn't without its own logistical challenge, even with her supportive partner Lt Col Peter Sollitt.

They say that for every minute a horse travels in transport it has walked the equivalent of that time in exercise due to the muscles it requires to support itself during the journey. Sharon had a five-hour round trip on the day and Mark's horse travelled the day before for over four hours.

All things considered the team did an amazing job, and claimed first position almost one minute faster than the Army team.

Conditions were horrendously wet and just as the team began their warm up, with Richard riding Timba for the first time, the heavens opened. Thoughts of wetsuits being appropriate rig had been entertained, but as the team set off on the long gruelling course the rain temporarily stopped allowing for better visibility.

● **Lt Richard Walker on Timba leads the way with Lt Cdr Vicky Sollitt and CPO Mark Shaw following**



● **A US Marine attempts to shield the ball from his British counterpart along a crowded byline**

Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clee, RNPOTYx3

RM 3 USMC 1

NEARING the end of their annual desert training in California, Royal Marines of 40 Commando lined up in the sporting arena for a day of football (aka soccer), American Football, rugby and softball against their American and Dutch counterparts in the Warrior Games.

The Warrior Day series of contests was a welcome break from the arduous Black Alligator training the men of Norton Manor have been conducting on the ranges of the the Mojave Desert.

The Brits, unsurprisingly, triumphed at football and rugby, but they also were victorious at gridiron – which was something of a shock for the hosts.

The US Marines took the softball title, leaving the Dutch empty-handed.

"The day was an excellent end to what has been a really good few weeks on exercise over here in the States, and saw us finally take on the US Marines in a physical challenge.

"The USMC has accommodated us brilliantly whilst we've been here, and Warrior Day was no different, with a hearty supply of bagpipes and burgers.

"The events were as physical as you'd expect for marines, but the result was never in doubt – although they gave us a few nervous moments in the football event, taking us to penalties."

One of his American counterparts, L/Cpl Ethan Curnow, an ammunition technician at the US Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Centre magazine area, added: "It is an awesome feeling when you compete with someone from another country.

"You can tell how competitive everyone is as soon as you walk out there.

"I really appreciated the Royal and Dutch Marines coming out to compete after a long training exercise."

RN pay the penalty

THE RN's rugby U23 side lined up against a potent Army side – and the early exchanges did not look promising for the sailors.

Facing a much bigger pack they struggled to get any possession and repeatedly conceded penalties and free kicks.

First Spellman was able to break deep into the Navy half from an Army scrum and then, following a penalty for not releasing in the tackle, Army scrum half Evans tapped quickly for the opening score.

Lowe was wide with the conversion but was able to extend the lead shortly afterwards when another penalty conceded by the Navy at the tackle was kicked for an 8-0 lead.

On many occasions the Army's battle tanks of centres broke the first up tackles and seemed to have opened up the defence for a second Army try. That they didn't says much for the resolute RN defence.

Then a strong run by Navy scrum half Jordan Shuttleworth again got the Navy deep in to the Army's half.

A deft chip from fly-half Josh Jones was eventually regained by centre Sam Davies for the Navy's opening score. Jones landed the conversion and with the half nearing its end the lead had been pegged back to a single point, 8-7.

The half ended with two blows to Navy chances. First vice captain John Barnett was forced to leave the field with a shoulder injury, replaced by Jack Tindle. Then another needless penalty was conceded, kicked by Lowe for an 11-7 half-time lead.

The RN started the second period far more brightly and were able to exert some good

pressure in the Army's 22.

Unfortunately spilled ball allowed the soldiers to lift the siege and break down field.

To the dismay of all RN supporters penalties kept being conceded, like a Chinese water torture – drip, drip, drip. Kick, kick, kick – Lowe added three more penalties to extend the Army's lead to 20-7 with fewer than 15 minutes to go.

It was also now the Navy's turn to have the man advantage as Hamilton, the Army's replacement hooker, was sin-binned for foul play. At last the Navy were able to put together a period of play unpunctuated by conceding penalties.

Suddenly the Army didn't look so self-assured and, following a driving maul that was held a metre short, the ball was moved right for Josh Blackburn to score in the corner. Jones kicked the conversion from wide out and suddenly the Navy were back to within a single score.

As is so often the case, the Army's kick-off put the Navy back under pressure and they struggled to get out of their half as they chased the crucial score.

Gradually the clock ticked towards 80 minutes without the Navy getting sight of the ball. When they eventually did it was deep in their own 22, leaving no other option that to roll the dice and risk all. Josh Jones attempted a chip kick for Meyer on the right wing. Unfortunately it was slightly underhit and Lewis, on the Army's left wing, was able to collect and cross over for the Army's second try and the final score of the match.

With the conversion missed the Army had a deserved victory by 25-14.

Boxers bristle in Bristol

Continued from page 44
action saw Murphy take a majority decision.

The final RN warrior on the night was team captain Cpl Marc 'Birdy' Bird (CTCRM), locking horns with light middleweight Sam Smith (NSC ABC).

From the off, Smith took control of the centre and looked to bully Bird around the ring.

However, the opening round saw the Royal Navy man use great ring savvy to throw quick combinations and move off. The hit-and-move tactics ensured Birdy took the opening session.

The second round saw more of the same from the busy Royal Marine, although the game, rough and tough Smith did get through with some powerful-looking right hands.

Going into the third round – and under strict instructions from the corner not to stand and trade with his opponent – the team captain ramped things up a gear with a relentless display of all-action boxing.

Still catching his man while throwing three-and-four-punch combinations, Birdy rolled under any punches from Smith and rallied with hooks to the head and body.

Some classy back-foot boxing as well as the ability to mix it with his opponent ensured Birdy took a unanimous points decision over the strongly supported and tough opponent.

Spreading the netball word

LT LINDA Harris and LWtr Eloise Smith returned to school to support international netball relations.

Emma Pickering, a PE teacher in Meoncross School in Stubbington, near Fareham, asked RNNA coach Lt Harris to help put her teams through their paces.

Linda, who also coaches grass roots and development teams in the United Services Netball Club, was keen to build relations with the community on behalf of both the RNNA and USNC.

She was asked to support a match against the Australian International School of Singapore during their netball tour of Cognita Schools across the UK.

With the assistance of LWtr Eloise Smith – an England Level C Award Umpire, RN and Combined Services player – they helped Meoncross to host the visitors.

The match started with speed and agility as the visiting Sharks showed their impressive ability on the court.

Meoncross fought back with determination and turned a number of centre passes; excellent defending and solid play down the court under the leadership of captain and GA Katie Birt enabled GS Olivia Coletta to convert a number of goals.

Despite putting on the pressure, the experience of the Sharks meant that they were able to play faster and they pulled away a little each quarter.

Meoncross answered with excellent control of the game by C Faye Clarke, but the Sharks won in the end.

The relationship between the RN and Meoncross School benefitted both as Eloise is training to become a UKCC Level 1 coach and B Award Umpire; the experience helped to build her portfolio in working with the younger age group.

Goals go in in Domingo

UNDETERRED by a 12-1 drubbing at the hands of a FIFA-ranked team, HMS Lancaster's footballers took to the field against another – more highly-placed – international side... and lost 14-2.

The sailors challenged the Dominican Republic's U23 squad to a fixture in the latest port visit on the frigate's Caribbean patrol.

At the beginning of their deployment, the footballers trotted out against Bermuda (ranked 161st in the world by FIFA) and lost heavily.

The Dominican Republic are placed 78th by football's international governing body – that's higher than New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Belarus, Canada and North Korea.

In front of nearly 300 loud, drum banging fans the teams warmed up before FIFA officials took to the field in the capital Santo Domingo and the National Anthems were played.

"When the anthems started playing that was when we realised that this team meant business, and it was time for us to step up to the plate," said team captain LET (WE) Stu Lawson.

The crowd were behind the home side, unsurprisingly, with chanting, dancing and banging of drums throughout the 90-minute encounter, making for a lively atmosphere.

Lancaster were strong for the opening ten minutes, before conceding their first goal; the blistering pace of the local attack proved too much for the sailors.

Six more strikes from the hosts followed with none in reply from Lancaster before the break.

An encouraging team talk from coach LPT 'Robbo' Robinson, an energy drink, a few changes to the side and the sailors emerged for the second period fired-up.

ET(ME) Kenny Fitzpatrick scored two blistering goals – with ensuing celebrations akin to the Reds winning of the World Cup.

"It was great to get on the score sheet twice, especially the first goal which was a goal I will remember for the rest of my life, a great footballing experience."

Unfortunately, the Dominican Republic side netted seven more goals for a 14-2 triumph.

Nevertheless, Robbo wasn't as sick as a parrot when the whistle blew on 90 minutes.

"This was a superb experience for the lads, who will never play in such an environment again – it was the nearest we will get to being pros," he said.

If 14-2 and 12-1 losses make the Red Rose sound like the whipping boys of Caribbean football, they're not: the record for the ship's deployment is eight wins, one draw and six defeats.

RN Seniors

A crisp autumn evening provided the perfect conditions for a demolition of Hampshire opposition at the Victory Stadium as the management team sought to establish their strongest side.

The several new faces did not disappoint, pressing their case for further selection and after a lively start the RN created two glorious chances.

Against the run of play, Totton drew first blood, prompting an RN response on 37 minutes.

LS Stephen Harding picked up a loose ball on the right side and delivered a pin-point cross to AB Max Blood who arrived in the centre of the box, met it perfectly



● A bearded Lancastrian tries to outfox two Dominican Republic players during the frigate's 14-2 defeat
Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen



ONLINE with Lt Mark Toogood, RNFA

with his head and thumped it into the roof of the net.

On the stroke of half time an in-swinging corner delivered by AB Leon Cashman was met at the far post by the head of LLogs Gordon Benjamin for a 2-1 lead.

In the second period, the RN built on their lead. On 51 minutes LS Harding found Mne Mike Scott with an accurate long-range diagonal pass. Scott expertly rounded the keeper and placed the ball into the back of an empty net to make it 3-1.

Totton's evening grew steadily worse courtesy of strikes from Cpl Shea Saunders, NA Hugh Howlett, and Mne Matt Dawson, before Cpl Dan Boere closed the scoring for a with two minutes to go for a 7-1 win.

A stormy Coach Road ground in Newton Abbott was the venue for the next clash with Devon.

The hosts took a very early lead when a 40-yard wind-assisted shot sailed over the head of the Navy keeper Mne Tom Baxter and into the net.

The RN battled hard in the wind and rain and were nearly rewarded when Saunders had a shot bounce off the chest of the Devon goalkeeper only to be cleared by the defence.

He saved strikes from Saunders and Navy captain LPT Craig Horsman to keep the score at 1-0 at the break.

With the wind behind them in the second half, the RN created plenty of chances. Saunders was yet again foiled by the Devon goalie, first by stopping a powerful free kick then by gathering another effort under the bar.

A penalty four minutes from time led to Saunders finally beating his arch nemesis.

Unfortunately Devon then burst into life and netted in the 89th and second minute of added time to ensure a late, cruel 3-1 victory.

RN U23

Horndean Hawks were the opponents for the U23s at Victory Stadium.

Fielding a significant number of debutants, the RN quickly found their feet and started the game at a high tempo.

AB(MW) Jordan Sullivan opened the scoring to finish from close range, before AET Scott Holliday put away the 25-yard free kick he'd earned for 2-0.

Sullivan grabbed his second,

then Holliday struck another superb set-piece, this time from 30 yards, making it 4-0 at half-time.

A fifth, from substitute AET Cooper, was added shortly after the break before a rash sliding challenge from Mne Myles Sutcliffe led to a Horndean penalty, which sent RN keeper LS Ash Kelley the wrong way.

Cooper restored the U23s' five-goal lead with his second, before Wtr Callum Stone drove into the box and smashed the ball past a helpless keeper for 7-1.

Impressive work from Mne Kemp and a neat – and unselfish – cut back for ET(WESM) Jake Batiszovsky made it 8-1 just before the final whistle.

RN Ladies

A match against strong local opposition – Gosport Borough Ladies – opened the ladies' season.

On eight minutes LNN Hannah Phillimore found the back of the net following a fine passing move created by MA Sue Badger and LCH Helen Kingscott from midfield, Phillimore slotting the ball into the bottom left corner.

Indeed, the first 20 minutes belonged to the RN as they started to look like a seasoned team accustomed to playing with each other.

With the opposition firmly on the back foot, the RN created – but missed – four more chances on goal.

Gosport then put the RN under mounting pressure with long-ball play and equalised.

Further pressure ensued and with the RN defence struggling to cope with the extremely-sharp Gosport forwards the half-time whistle blew at 2-1 in the civilian outfit's favour.

In an attempt to counter Gosport dominance the RN started the second half with a 4-3-3.

This immediately changed the game and led to the attacking midfielder AET Thea Kaptein levelling with a fantastic long-range strike on her debut.

With the scores tied at 2-2 and with only 20 minutes to go the flow of the game took another turn.

Despite a gritty RN performance, Gosport's well-drilled team scored two more goals in the final ten minutes and the game finished at 4-2.



Picture: Briony Richardson, Plymouth University

Royal cyclists have the Common touch

The RN/RM Mountain Bike Championships were held on Woodbury Common with one of the best turnouts so far – 50 competitors from all over the country, with riders from 29 Commando representing the Army.

Despite appalling weather conditions earlier in the week, on the day the weather was almost perfect.

The running order for the event was: senior (U39) and veterans (40 and over), who would complete five laps, followed by the novice and women's categories (four laps).

On the sound of the air horn the first wave was gone in a cloud of dust, elbows and metal; two minutes later the novices and women set off leaving little to do but wait for the quickest riders to get round the first lap, which did not take long: 12m 35s to be precise.

Shortly into the second lap came the only 'non-mechanical' casualty of the day in the form of CPO Matt Scott. Going through a huge puddle, he struck a submerged pothole and came unstuck.

Fast lap times continued throughout the event – the fastest cyclists averaged around 15 minutes. The quickest rider, Surg Lt Cdr Lovell (Raleigh), shook off his dogged chaser – and early leader – Sgt Ollie Yates on the final lap, finishing in a very impressive 1h 8m 8s.

Throughout the day RM Musicians Lucy Hurley and Emma Prior provided a massage facility for the competitors following their races.

"The Woodbury Common course is as good – if not better – than many major civilian event locations," said Maj Andy Plewes, RM Cycling Association Secretary.

"To race in 'open' events run under British Cycling rules you require a race licence and to belong to an affiliated club to be authorised to compete for the RN and RM in events in almost all cycling disciplines. The RNRMCA is an affiliated club. This also provides access to group rides, team kit, training camps, advice and discounts on bikes and equipment."

The RMCA is part of the RN/RM Cycling Association – so to be part of the former you must join the latter. Membership is £35 for three years. Members get a free RNRMCA racing jersey, then membership to the RMCA is free.

Results

Seniors: 1 – Surg Lt Comd Lovell 1h 8m 8s; 2 – Sgt Ollie Yates (CTCRM) 1h 9m 57s; 3 – PO Mackenzie (Heron) 1h 12m 22s
Veterans: 1 – Maj Plewes (NCHQ) 1h 11m 11s; 2 – PO Smith (Vivid) 1h 20m 34s; 3 – Si Welch (539 ASRM) 1h 34m 9s
Novices: 1 – J Kerman (29 Cdo) 1h 7m 9s; 2 – R Hales (CTCRM physio) 1h 8m 22s; 3 – J Powell (Woodbury CC) 1h 9m 32s
Women: 1 G Ellis (Drake) 1h 53m 59s; 2 J Smith (RNRMCA) 1h 43m 49s (3 laps).

Titanic East-West clash

Continued from page 44

game seemingly lost, East shed their shackles and once more produced the rugby of the first 15 minutes. Suddenly they looked a good side again. A try for Tyler was the least they deserved and it was a shame that Carter could not convert.

Another turnover gave RN West possession, however, and Jonny Stephen was on hand to score his second try and finally

secure the victory for West. Jones capped his second half performance with a conversion from the touchline to produce a 39-20 final score for the West.

In the other match, held at CTCRM, the Royal Marines were unable to hold off the challenge of the Fleet Air Arm, who won 32-17 in a feisty encounter that saw the FAA's lock Stan Mortensen sent off for foul play.



The best lifters in the world...

TWO Royal Navy powerlifters are on top of the world after beating all comers from around the world.

AET Reece Meakin (pictured on the right), from RNAS Culdrose, and British and 2011 world champion Mne Sam Dew (left), serving with 40 Commando at Norton Manor in Somerset, took the titles in their respective classes at the World Drug Free Powerlifting Federation championship in Glasgow.

The event drew more than 120 lifters from around the globe including competitors from the UK, USA, Russia, France and Canada. Reece and Sam were the sole representatives from the UK Armed Forces.

Each lifter takes three attempts at the three disciplines: squat, bench press and deadlift, with the aim being to reach a final maximum lift to contribute to their combined overall total.

Reece was first to lift and didn't disappoint with a staggering 212.5kg squat. He came in strong on the bench and pressed an enormous 157.5kg on his third attempt. Reece rounded off his day with a personal best in the deadlift of 257.5kg for an incredible total of 627.5kg – setting a new world record as he took the junior world champion title.

Sam, world champion at 75kg in 2011, lifted in the 82.5kg weight class in 2013 and hit a phenomenal 240kg squat. He was successful with 150kg on the bench press and narrowly missed an attempt at 160kg. Sam also finished the day with a new personal best of 250kg in the deadlift for a whopping total of 640kg, taking the world title in his class.

“Winning the junior world championship topped off an amazing year and to do it with a world record was the icing on the cake,” said a delighted Reece.

Seasoned lifter Sam added his motto: “There ain't nothing to it, but to do it.”

For more information on the sport in the RN visit <https://sites.google.com/site/rnpowerlifting/home>.

Boxers bristle in Bristol

THREE RN fighters represented the Senior Service at the National Smelting Co ABC Open Boxing Show in Bristol.

First into the ring, CTRCM's Cpl 'Jimmy' Carter, facing the taller Dan Goldstone (NSC ABC) at the light heavyweight level, writes *PO(PTI) Daz 'The Hatchet' Hoare, RNBA*.

A cagey opening round saw both boxers weigh each other up, with little, if any, scoring. The local man pushed plenty of jabs out but didn't score against Carter's high guard.

A busier second round saw Goldstone throw plenty and try to score to the body, while Carter remained tight and looked for openings to counter.

Under instructions from the corner, the green beret produced a high-tempo last round on the front foot.

He forced his physical presence on his man and got through to his opponent with some clean lead hands.

Goldstone became slightly ragged but was still throwing plenty. The final round saw him punished by the referee and deducted a point for persistent slapping with the hook.

This was a difficult contest to score, with Goldstone the busier, throwing lots but rarely penetrating the guard of Carter, who seemed to land the cleaner punches. A close majority

decision saw the home fighter take it on points.

In-form Mne Lewis Dugan (42 Cdo) came up against another seasoned quality opponent in Empire ABC's Tom Murphy.

A no-nonsense start saw both boxers wrestle for the centre of the ring with plenty of scoring punches from both.

Four high-tempo rounds saw the commando feign with his lead hand and score with his right, followed by a left hook. Constant head movement made it difficult for Murphy to pin him down.

Murphy however, was quick in and out of range with fast footwork and often scored with straight singles.

There was plenty to admire from both fighters and the way they were prepared to stand toe to toe.

Going into the third, the corner sensed that Dugan would be the stronger, fitter man, and instructed their charge to double the left hooks up to head and body going into the third. This tactic saw the marine score some eye catching punches.

A thrilling final round saw Dugan hurt Murphy with a straight right hand, only for the Empire boxer to land cleanly shortly after and back the Navy boxer up against the ropes at the end of the round.

A really close bout full of

Continued on page 43

The south face of the Sultan



HMS Sultan's Sub Lt Sam Fayers makes his way up the jagged, multi-coloured 'rockface' as the Gosport establishment hosts the Eastern region climbing contest.

Organised by LPT James Hitchcock, the competition was opened to all three Services and climbers of every level and ability, with a team of adjudicators from the climbing wall manufacturers Entre Prises also assisting.

The event also served as a taster session with two courses designed for novices and experienced climbers.

As the host, Sultan was well represented with the majority of competitors in a field of 20, which also included three females.

Three scored runs, where points were accrued based on the distance climbed, were followed by a timed run to separate the highest scorers and determine who was also the quickest to the top of the indoor wall.

Competition was fierce and at the end of the three runs just two climbers in each category were left in a position to successfully score maximum points, suggesting the time factor would come in to play to decide the victor.

The final novice run was incredibly tight with just 0.39 seconds between the winning time of 1m 6s set by AB Gemmel, just ahead of Sultan shipmate PO Byrne.

In the open category final Sub Lt Jones RNZN, on the System Engineering Management Course at Sultan, set an exceptionally fast time of just 51s.

Despite another successful climb, PO Page (HMNB Portsmouth) was unable to keep pace, finishing with a very respectable time of 1m 11s.

Picture: LA(Phot) Guy Pool, HMS Sultan

Titanic East-West clash

THE West is the best – as settled in the inaugural Royal Navy East versus West rugby union commands clash.

The match, played at Portsmouth's United Services ground, produced six tries as both sides looked to attack at every opportunity.

The game was billed as the battle of half-backs and proved to be an intriguing battle between Carter and Loydal, the young promising half-backs for East and the more established and experienced pairing of Stephen and Jones for West.

The first quarter certainly belonged to the Pompey pair, but gradually West began to assume control of the game, first through Jonny Stephen at nine and then, particularly in the second half, through some assured play from Josh Jones at fly-half. Come the final whistle the pair had guided the West to a comfortable 39-20 victory.

Playing with the wind in the first half, it was RN East first out of the blocks. A period of sustained pressure kept West on the back foot and their industrious openside Baillie darted over for the opening try, converted by Carter, who also landed a penalty shortly afterwards for a 10-0 lead.



● The West's two-try-scorer Jonny Stephen prepares to distribute the ball

Picture: Geraint Ashton Jones, Alligin Photography

With the West struggling to get any ball, the back row of Daniels, Baillie and Matthews were dictating the play for East, ably supported by Woods from the second row and some scything runs from outside centre Dyer.

However they were unable to sustain their play and as their intensity waned so RN West began to get some ball and field position.

First a Josh Jones penalty and then a try from No 8, Hillman (unconverted) pulled the score back to 10-8. However from the restart West had clearly lost the concentration which got them back in to the game as they conceded a soft try to Daniels, which Carter was unable to convert.

Jones reduced the deficit to four points with a further penalty

for West as both sides went through a phase of making too many unforced errors.

The game then turned on a piece of individual skill from Navy-capped half-back Jonny Stephen. His eye for a gap remains as sharp as ever and with the close defence of East not properly aligned he stepped through the hole, accelerated and scored from 50 metres out with Jones converting.

A score of 18-15 would probably have been fair at half-time. However with the final move of the half, and East's Dylan Woods in the sin bin, West scored their third try and were able to enjoy a comfortable 23-15 lead.

The first 20 minutes of the second half was controlled through the boot and vision of Josh Jones. Time and again he turned the East defence with kicking that used the favourable wind well.

Whenever they sat deeper in defence he brought his centres of Dando and Giggs into the game and when this pressure forced the penalties he kicked the points. 26-15. 29-15. 32-15. Slowly the game had slipped from East's grasp and West had a stranglehold upon it.

As is often the case, with a

Continued on page 43